Space and the Articulation of Monstrosity within Popular Culture

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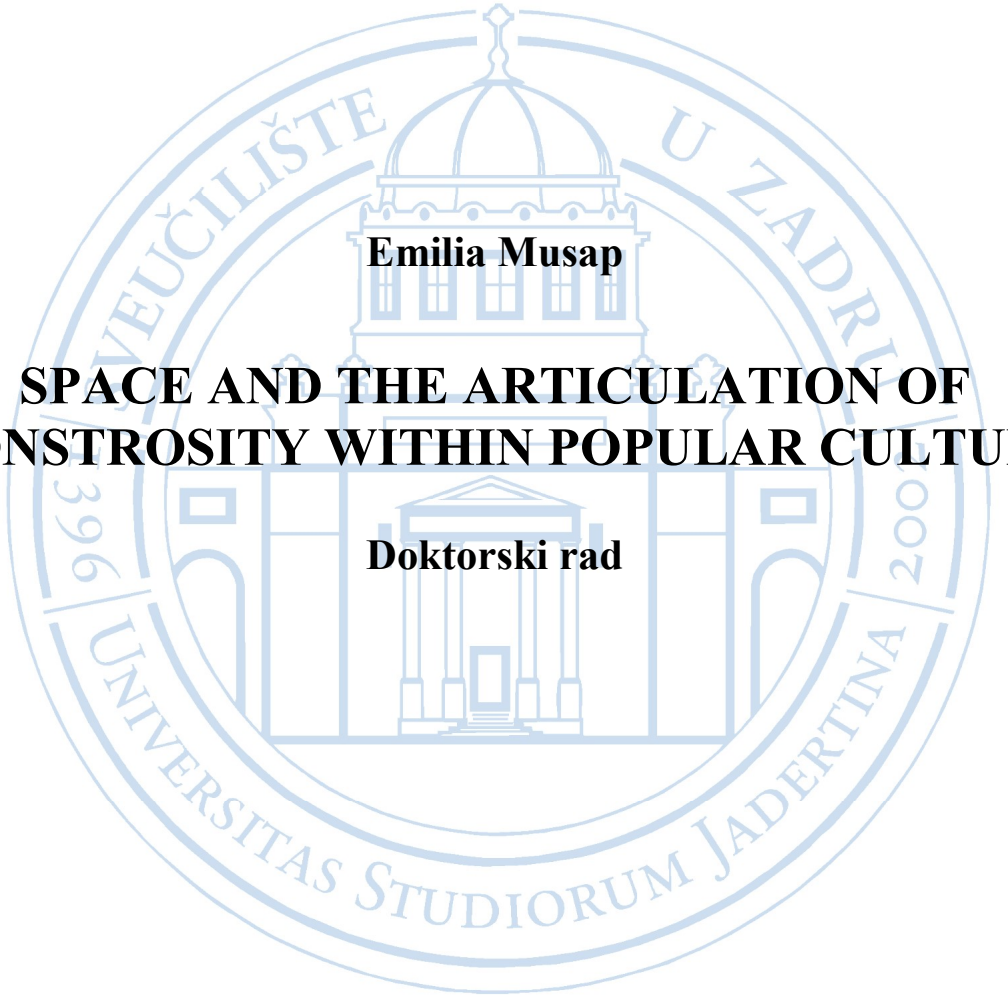
POSLIJEDIPLOMSKI SVEUČILIŠNI STUDIJ
HUMANISTIČKE ZNANOSTI



Emilia Musap

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Doktorski rad

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Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 24. lipnja 2022.

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1. Introduction

In the analysis of the correlation between places and monstrous selves in popular culture narratives, the dissertation engages with different theoretical approaches and their concepts. To avoid employing a somewhat non-systematic approach in the analysis of the chosen case studies, it is necessary to determine the theories and concepts that will inform the dissertation's interpretative direction. Although the theoreticians discussed throughout the dissertation often admit to the futility of attempting to accurately define these theories and concepts, we still must position them, although this is achieved through employing a non-restrictive, that is, non-exclusory theoretical framework. Moreover, the aim of the introductory chapter is not to present an extensive examination of the concepts of popular culture, space, place, and monstrosity, as seen in publications such as Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson's *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies* (1991), Phil Hubbard's *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (2010), or Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996), but, by interrelating these theories and concepts, to create a tentative theoretical framework that moves across genres and media, enabling the exploration of the correlation between places and monstrous selves in popular culture narratives.

Because the dissertation engages in contrasting theories and concepts, it grounds its analysis in popular culture, similarly characterized by a diversity of phenomena and perspectives. "Popular culture" has always been a contested concept; its indistinction often blurring into theoretical imprecision. Scarcely any two authors agree in all aspects as to what it really "is." This is why, perhaps, Tony Bennett, as early as the 1980s, concluded that there was no such thing as popular culture ("Popular Culture" 28).[1] Since the publication of Bennett's article, popular culture has been consolidated as a subject of analysis and assessed by numerous theoreticians. At the same time, one turns to *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (2004) only to find out that, in Dominic Strinati's words, not much time has been *wasted* on attempting to define it (xvii; emphasis added). Since, as Strinati argues,

[1] In "Popular Culture: A Teaching Object" (1980), Bennett wrote that the notion of popular culture is practically meaningless since it manifests as "a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys" (18).

popular culture is present in "different societies, within different groups in societies, and among societies and groups in different historical periods" (xiv), he draws from Dick Hebdige in proposing a non-restrictive and non-exclusory definition that delineates the most common components considered popular: "a set of generally available artifacts: films, records, clothes, TV programs, modes of transport, etc." (Hebdige qtd. in Strinati Ibid.). However, because of its "general availability," popular culture has been conflated with mass culture and, in turn, condemned for imposing and impoverishing "high" culture by generating a group of non-discriminating consumers who chose triviality over "meaning-fulness." Is popular culture qualitatively inferior, intrinsically different from other forms of culture? History has shown that said constituents do not only move in and out of the categories of "high" and "mass," but that the categories themselves are changeable. In *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (2009), John Storey states that the change was primarily affected by the emergence of postmodernism in the United States and Great Britain in the 1950s and 1960s (180). Specifically, he regards Susan Sontag's idea of "new sensibility"[2] as a "revolt against what is seen as the cultural elitism of modernism" (182). The result of this "new sensibility" was the refusal of reference points that predetermine the constitution of the categories of "high" and "low" enacting, in turn, the re-assessment of the "value" of popular culture. Most importantly, with the abandonment of the rigid distinction between "high" and "low" came the recognition of popular culture as a subject worthy of serious scholarly attention.[3] At the same time, the refusal of the categorical certainties between "high" and "low" has further

[2] In her book, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (1966), Sontag states that "one important consequence of the new sensibility is that the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture seems less and less meaningful" (qtd. in Storey 183).

[3] In "The New Validation of Popular Culture" (1987), Michael Schudson argued that popular culture was gaining legitimacy across American universities in the 1980s. Similarly, Laura Grindstaff, in "Culture and Popular Culture: A Case for Sociology" (2008), refers to studies such as Andrea Press' *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class, and Generation in American Television Experience* (1991), Wendy Griswold's "American Character and the American Novel" (1981), and, most famously, Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby's multilevel analysis *Soap Fans: Pursuing Pleasures and Making Meaning in Everyday Life* (1995) to emphasize that popular culture has already been established as a legitimate intellectual terrain in the 1980s and 1990s (208-210).

complicated the conceptualization of popular culture.[4] This is why all of the aforementioned authors have either acknowledged the potential problems of defining such an ambivalent and contested concept (Storey, 2009), admitted to the futility of attempting to define it (Strinati, 2004), or established its non-existence (Bennett, 1980). None of the authors above agree that popular culture is a predetermined conceptual category with a well-established set of texts and practices. After all, it is constantly reconstructed through the act of theoretical engagement that aims at defining it. Yet, the thread linking all of the theorizations together is the perception of popular culture as a transdisciplinary subject of study. If anything, popular culture, to paraphrase Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson, affirms that no single discipline represents an "adequate" approach to it (*Rethinking Popular Culture* 4).[5]

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[4] For example, in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (2009), Storey offers a systematic chapter-by-chapter discussion on the six definitions of "popular," exemplifying how it is always defined in contrast to other conceptual categories. According to Storey, "popular" has persistently been positioned as qualitatively inferior, as the "texts and practices that fail to meet the required standards to qualify as high culture" (6). Conversely, it has also been positioned as quantitatively superior and, in turn, discarded as "a hopelessly commercial culture," an "imposed and impoverished culture," whose "audience is a mass of non-discriminating consumers" (8). Accordingly, in his article, "Toward a Definition of Popular Culture" (2011), Holt N. Parker argues that Storey's definitions of popular culture as qualitatively "superior" or "inferior," as "mass culture," as a "product of the people," as "a battlefield for hegemony," or as "a chimera to deconstructed by postmodernism" are all problematic (169). For example, while the qualitative approach would position popular culture as an "imposed and impoverished culture" (Storey 8), the quantitative approach, i.e., as "a culture which is widely favored or well-liked by many people" (5), would equate it with mass culture. Storey himself problematizes the definition: "Unless we can agree on a figure over which something becomes popular culture, and below which it is just culture, we might find that widely favored or well-liked by many people would include so much as to be virtually useless as a conceptual definition of popular culture" (5-6).

[5] In her article "Culture and Popular Culture: A Case for Sociology" (2008), Laura Grindstaff notes that most cultural sociologists agree with Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson's broad definition of popular culture as referring to "the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population" (qtd. in Grindstaff 207-208). At the same time, Grindstaff acknowledges that recent arguments have focused "less on what popular culture is and more on what it does" or, more specifically, on how it is "read and understood" (208). Moreover, she highlights two "best-known strands of sociological research" on popular culture that have transformed it into "a legitimate intellectual terrain" (Ibid.) – the "production of culture perspective," which is "less concerned with interpreting culture than with understanding the characteristics of the industries that produce it," and the micro-focused "constructionist/interpretivist

Thus, popular culture provides a possibility for applying an array of contrasting concepts in discussing the diverse components that constitute it. Specifically, since popular culture is, according to Strinati's argument, permeated by a plurality of media, the dissertation aims at analyzing the interrelation between places and monstrous selves in novels, television series, and films. Spatially oriented scholars within the field of humanities have devoted ample attention to analyzing representations of "real" or existing spaces and places. However, Robert T. Tally Jr. states that scholars have also been highlighting the importance of "otherworldly" spaces and places by grounding their analyses in different media, such as print media, computer games, film, and television series, which "may supplement, compete with, and potentially problematize literary representation" (*Literary Cartographies* xii). Thus, the dissertation aims at providing new analytical possibilities by supplementing literary representations with the "otherworldly" spaces and places of films and television series. Moreover, Tally argues that all "narratives are in some ways devices or methods used to map the real-and-imagined spaces of human experience" (3). At the same time, "these narratives, which are also maps, must be understood as objects to be mapped" (Ibid.). Such an approach enables new and creative opportunities for studying the significance and meaning of spaces and places across a wide variety of media.

Studying the interrelation between places and articulations of monstrosity presupposes the positioning of place as a relational category, which is continuously constructed and reconstructed through individual interactions and interpersonal interactions. The dissertation's tentative theoretical framework is primarily based on Yi-Fu Tuan's premise that spaces are transformed into places[6] by means of inscribing individual meaning, and on Gaston

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perspective," which emphasizes its "expressive and symbolic dimensions" (209-210). According to Grindstaff, one strand of the "constructionist/interpretivist" perspective is "textual analysis" (King 2009; Bulman 2005, qtd. in Grindstaff 210), which encompasses a number of theoretical frameworks (210). Accordingly, the existence of these strands suggests that popular culture is moving from an "*otherness* which is always absent/present" (Storey 1) to a "legitimate" area of study.

[6] In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) Tuan discusses the two central concepts of human geography – space and place. Although he considers them as codependent "components of the lived world," he argues that "place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other" (3). The former is permanence, essential in creating a sense of stability, while the latter is boundlessness. When space is being inscribed with the "oneiric" experiences of phenomenology and human geography, it is

Bachelard's positioning of place as affective or, more precisely, as always already partial. Such an approach transcends the analysis of places *per se*; it strives to understand the processes of individual inscription and the significance of specific places. Elaborating on the phenomenology of place, Bachelard highlights how "it is not a question of describing houses, or enumerating their picturesque features and analyzing for which reasons they are comfortable" (*The Poetics of Space* 4). Thus, to define or, in Bachelard's words, to describe these different spatial constructs discussed throughout the dissertation as places *a priori* is to risk their one-dimensional reading. In other words, a particular place and its inhabiting subject are always interdependent; without the subject, place is nothing more than a meaningless possibility. As Tuan asserts, "In the absence of the right people, things and places are quickly drained of meaning" (*Space and Place* 140). According to the two authors, specific spaces transform into places through the process of habitation that presupposes the inscription of individual meaning and the construction of memory. Yet, the concepts of "meaning," "memory," and "place" are not predefined but are constituted by repetition during the process of dwelling. Therefore, the "meaning" of place can only ever be established by its inhabiting individual as per phenomenology's and human geography's premise. Still, these predominantly felicitous places are, for both Tuan and Bachelard, imprinted and, in a way, improved with exclusively oneiric experiences that emphasize their existence as safe shelters from the threatening exteriority. However, what happens when the individual, this agent of inscription, is a morally depraved or degenerate "monster" whose inscribed content clearly invalidates the exclusively oneiric experiences that both authors advocate for?

The subsequent chapters aim at analyzing specific spatial concepts; the first chapter will focus on the concept of the city, the second on the concept of the house, the third on the concept of the body, observed as a spatial construct, and the fourth on the concept of non-place. The introductory sections of subsequent chapters will delineate important theoretical

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transformed into place. Thus, one of the guiding questions of *Space and Place* is: "in what ways do people attach meaning to and organize space and place?" (5). Tuan perceives "transformation" as an inscription of individual meaning: "the interior of the house . . . reveals purposes and ends that have directed human energy" (183). However, neither phenomenology nor human geography accounts for the possibility of inscribing "negative" ones. Such an inscription, although "negative," also implies human agency or, in Tuan's words, "directed human energy" (Ibid.). Therefore, the majority of spatial concepts discussed throughout the dissertation are always already places.

approaches and authors from which the analysis will draw. It is important to clarify that the chapters do not present all of the potential place/monstrosity amalgamations. Thus, the dissertation does not claim to be complete; there will always be novels, films, and television series that could have been included or, perhaps, analyzed through different theoretical frameworks.

The first chapter, "Spatiality and the City," will focus on the concept of the city. Since the city is characterized by myriad modes of aesthetic articulations, it will aim its attention at *fin de siècle* London, specifically, the area of East End that, as will be argued, coexists as a safe place for its "surplus" inhabitants and as an anxiogenic space. Precisely, this part of the dissertation will draw from Julian Wolfreys's seminal study on the end-of-century city of London. Furthermore, grounding its analysis in Stephen Hunter's novel *I, Ripper* (2016) and Richard Warlow's television series *Ripper Street* (2012-2016), the chapter will contend that the relationship between the East End and the criminal is cyclical. To paraphrase Wolfreys, the criminal does not merely make East End complicit in enacting violence (*Inventions of the City* 9). Every encounter between the monstrous subject and East End presupposes the inscription of non-oneiric content. Thus, the chapter aims to argue that East End's atmospheric and architectural conditions allow for the articulation of moral monstrosity that simultaneously constructs that same setting as monstrous.

The second chapter, "Haunted Domestic Space," will focus on the concept of the haunted house. Grounding its analysis in Richard Matheson's novel *Hell House* (1959) and Mike Flanagan's television series *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018), the chapter aims at asserting both Hell and Hill House as projections of its original owners' non-oneiric content. Since such content is clearly non-compliant with phenomenology's and human geography's systemic values, the dissertation will engage with the concept of the uncanny. In other words, the chapter will draw from Anthony Vidler's reformulation of Sigmund Freud to argue that the uncanny emerges as a psychological phenomenon, a sensation that stems from the subject because it always arises from the return of the repressed. Thus, it will underline the uncanny as the experience of "spatial estrangement" (Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* 11), provoked by the "mental state of projection" (Ibid.) of the original owner's non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it until the owner is destroyed or dispersed. Interrelating it with Tuan's and Bachelard's premise that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, this

"mental state of projection" will be defined as a deliberate inscription that initially altered the house into an affective accumulation of the original owner's non-oneiric content. Finally, the chapter will argue that the connection between the two moral monsters, Emeric Belasco and Poppy Hill, and the two houses is cyclical because both abuse them as instruments to afflict the "intruders." While Belasco uses the house as a stage upon which he projects images of supposedly sentient presences to instigate the return of the inhabitants' repressed instinctual impulses, Poppy plays on the inhabitants' unresolved trauma, seducing them into committing both murder and suicide.

The third chapter, "The Artificial Body as a Spatial Construct," will open up with the discussion on the cyborg's potential to denaturalize the naturalized coherence between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality on the example of Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina* (2014) and Thomas Berger's novel *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* (2004). Drawing from Donna Haraway's and Judith Butler's anti-essentialist arguments that deconstruct the idea that there are intrinsic attributes that pre-assert individuals as being male or female, the two case study subchapters aim at stressing that the cyborgs populating the two narratives do not break down the coherence between the beforementioned categories. Afterward, the chapter will position the artificial body of the cyborg as a spatial construct. In particular, drawing from Linda McDowell's assessment of the body being the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" and "malleability" stressing that it is subjected to the process of continuous (re)construction (*Gender, Identity, and Place* 34), the chapter will argue that the artificial bodies are transformed through the inscription of one's non-oneiric content. Thus, technologically built bodies can be analyzed as spatially changeable constructs, repeatedly reiterated through individual interactions, in line with Bachelard's and Tuan's postulations. Because both Nathan Bateman and Ellery Pierce create hypersexualized cyborgs, the chapter will contend that this non-oneiric content is indicative of Anne Balsamo's unconscious desires that underline contemporary cyborg representations ("Reading Cyborgs" 149). Furthermore, her postulation allows for the analysis of the cyborg's body as, according to Vidler's reappropriation of Freud, the representation of one's repressed content (79). The chapter aims at arguing that said content can be specified as instinctual impulses, interpreted as either deviation in respect to the sexual object, as in Nathan's case, or unresolved Oedipal impulses, as in Ellery's case. Therefore, the violence of the initial inscription and accompanying sexual abuse will reveal the moral monstrosity of both Garland's and Berger's male scientists.

The fourth and final chapter, "Non-place," will examine the concept of non-place on the example of Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's television series *Westworld* (2016-) and Mike Bockoven's novel *FantasticLand* (2016). Drawing from Edward Relph, the chapter aims at delineating the two amusement parks, Nolan and Joy's Westworld and Bockoven's FantasticLand, as achieved through technique-oriented planning that mass-produces places primarily focused on functional efficiency. The preoccupation with this efficiency positions the two parks as single-purpose sites absent of both Bachelard's and Tuan's systemic values. Thus, these places meet all the mandatory criteria to be classified as Marc Augé's non-place. Drawing from Augé's argument, the chapter will contend that the dissolution of one's determinants upon entering a particular non-place provides for anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (103), enabling the enactment of violence. The chapter will then refer to Havi Carel's recent reconstruction of the Freudian two-modeled death drive theory to argue that it is possible to interpret role-play as the destructive discharge of the death drive's phenomenon of sadism. Thus, the chapter's central argument is that non-places, divorced from everyday experiences, either directly, as in Westworld, or indirectly, as in FantasticLand, allow the articulation of moral monstrosity.

Finally, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical ideas that influenced the positioning of the aforementioned individuals as moral monsters. Because of its incoherent body that destabilizes structures of signification, thus refusing to be consolidated into a recognizable feature, the monster cannot be condensed into a single definition. The elusiveness of its contemporary embodiments prevents any attempts at establishing an explicit or exact binary opposition that would expedite one's understanding of the archetypal Other. Namely, the dissertation will discuss various narratives in which monstrosity has, so to say, "left" its archetypal locus – the body. In the attempt to assert the monsters that populate the chosen popular culture cases as moral ones, the dissertation will primarily refer to Michel Foucault's *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France* (1974-75). Although several scholars discussed throughout the dissertation (Halberstam, 1995; Cohen, 1996; A. Wright, 2013),[7] have

[7] All of these theoreticians argue that the rethinking of boundaries is crucial in defining the contested concept of "monstrosity" which "refuses to participate in the classificatory order of things" (Cohen 6). In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996), Jeffrey Jerome Cohen claims that he did not have enough time to discuss the idea of a morally depraved individual, although he asserts monsters as our children, positioning them

explicitly asserted the existence of the human monster, chronicling its transgressive nature that refuses to conform to societal norms and rules (Cohen, *Monster Theory* 16), they have not discussed the possibility of the moral monster. Thus, the following chapters will refer to Foucault who differentiated between the "traditional monster" and the "individual to be corrected," identifying the former within its supernatural and/or mythical origins and the latter within "the play of relations of conflict and support that existed" within certain social contexts (57-58).[8] While the "traditional monster" is difference embodied, existing outside of cultural categories, the "individual to be corrected is an everyday phenomenon," typically regular in their irregularity (58). In the case of the latter, the attribution of monstrosity is juridico-moral, pointing toward "a monstrosity of conduct rather than of nature" (73).[9] Such an individual is, according to Foucault, incapable of integrating themselves in society, chooses chaos and disorder, carries out extravagant or extraordinary acts, despises and denies morality and its laws, and is capable of provoking violence (17; 56). Since moral monsters operate outside of

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as "[these] thing[s] of darkness I acknowledge mine" (20). In *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995), Jack Halberstam states "We wear modern monsters like skin, they are us, they are on us and in us. Monstrosity no longer coagulates into a specific body, a single face, a unique feature; it is replaced with a banality that fractures resistance" (163). The marker of monstrosity is no longer wholly visual. Finally, in *Human Monstrosity in Visual Culture* (2005), Alexa Wright writes that ever since the nineteenth century, monstrosity has manifested in an individual's morally ambiguous behavior rather than in their appearance (125). In other words, all of these authors assert that monstrosity is no longer a visual phenomenon in itself but that it has become an expression of one's moral disorder. The narratives that will be discussed throughout the dissertation feature the deconstruction of the archetypal Other, invoking the "Am I a monster or monster maker?" (Halberstam 36) paranoia acutely present throughout Halberstam's *Skin Shows*.

[8] According to Foucault, the "individual to be corrected emerges in the play of relations of conflict and support that exist between the family and the school, workshop, street, quarter, parish, church, police," etc. (57-58).

[9] The "moral monster" or the "monstrous criminal" first loomed up at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, most prominently in the works of Marquis de Sade. Specifically, Foucault discusses de Sade's *Juliette* (1797-1801) in which monsters are portrayed as individuals to whom income or political authority offers the potentiality of transgressing against nature (100). The first monster appeared during the French Revolution, when the "kinship between the criminal and the tyrant, between the lawbreaker and the despotic monarch" (93) was being established. Both were characterized by their desire to reject, disregard, or break the law. Since then, the "moral monster" has been defined as "someone who breaks the pact to which he has subscribed and prefers his own interest to the laws governing the society to which he belongs" (92).

society's judicial and normative boundaries, they are not characterized by aberrant appearance, but by aberrant behavior, testifying to their condemnable character. The frame of reference for the moral monster is, per Foucault's postulation, the law. Accordingly, Foucault states that such individuals promote their "will over the entire social body only through a permanent state of violence" (84). Finally, because the moral monster's body is not immediately recognizable as being outside of cultural categories, thus impeding our interpretation of the archetypal Other, each of the consecutive chapters will further elaborate on its embodiments.

In the chapter "Spatiality and the City," the first case study subchapter will contend that monstrosity is not materialized as the explicit visual manifestation of the unnatural but is characterized by the irregularity of interests that motivate Thomas Dare's aberrant actions. Similarly, the second case study subchapter will claim that the primary purpose of both Arthur Donaldson's and Claxton's aggressive acting-out is acquiring pleasure. According to Foucault's theoretical articulation, the marker of moral monstrosity is present in precisely such individuals who prioritize personal interests over societal rules and norms. In the chapter "Haunted Domestic Space," both case study subchapters will contend that the two presences subvert the archetypal representation of ghosts who have simply returned to haunt the living and who frighten the inhabitants because of their spectral bodies. In other words, it is not the absent, yet the present body of both Emeric Belasco of Hell House and Poppy Hill of Hill House that marks them as monstrous, but their deliberate evocation of the repressed past for the sole purpose of pleasure. In the chapter, "The Artificial Body as a Spatial Construct," both case study subchapters will position the two male scientists, Nathan Bateman and Ellery Pierce, as "bad" scientists or, specifically, moral monsters. Under the pretense of investigating the acquisition of artificial intelligence, both Nathan and Ellery stand "outside" of societal laws (Foucault 92), well-secluded in their research facilities and countryside retreats. Still, instead of perceiving the potentiality of a technologically assisted de-materialization, they prioritize their personal interests, abusing the bodies, to paraphrase Judith Butler, as nothing more than passive sites of sexual exploitation (*Undoing Gender* 34). In the final chapter, "Non-place," the two case study subchapters will also argue for the absence of morality. Because both Westworld's and FantasticLand's guests and former employees are enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment while abusing, degrading, or destroying both hosts and/or one another, they will be positioned as, according to Foucault, moral monsters. It is safe to

say that these individuals are morally egregious. This is evident in the number of artificial and/or actual bodies and body parts that have been violated, and that are now scattered across both Westworld and FantasticLand. These corpses have been shot, stabbed, torn apart, sexually assaulted, and mercilessly mutilated. Therefore, all of the chapters will contend that the idea of monstrousness implies that one's interiority has become as horrible as what was once imagined to be one's inhuman, unspeakable, or unthinkable body.

Finally, to consider the correlation between places and monstrous selves, one has to presuppose a psychological dimension to fictional characters. The recourse to psychoanalysis is viewed by many scholars (Brooks, 1987; Bayard, 1999; Rabaté, 2014) as problematic since it displaces the object of analysis from the text to the fictional character. Accordingly, its approach is based on the premise that the behavior of fictional characters is attributed to their putative unconscious, which, in Peter Brooks' view, is methodologically disquieting as it deconstructs the character into an effect of textual codes (335). Contrary to Brooks' belief, the dissertation does not reduce psychoanalysis to a convenient tool for providing "interesting" insights. Its *raison d'être* is to enable analyzing the interrelation between specific spatial concepts and articulations of monstrosity. Thus, it becomes imperative to perceive these protagonists as "real" people, possessing consciousness and, more importantly, unconsciousness. To support such a stance, the dissertation draws on Morton Kaplan and Robert Kloss who, in *Unspoken Motive* (1973), argue that "fictional characters are representations of life and, as such, can only be understood if we assume that they are real," and, further, that "this assumption allows us to find unconscious motivation[s] by the same procedure that the traditional critic uses to assign conscious ones" (qtd. in E. Wright 46). Several scholars discussed throughout the dissertation's chapters claim that certain architectural constructions can transform into active antagonists, thus inflicting their inhabitants independently. For instance, Tony Magistrale asserts the haunted house as awakened, assuming an independent, "infernal biology" (*Abject Terror* 90), Dale Bailey positions it as a proactive antagonist that subordinates the spectral presences that populate it (*American Nightmares* 57-58), while Rahel Sixta Schmitz sees it as alive and actively antagonistic toward its inhabitants who are wholly subservient to its malevolent hive-like mind (*Haunted by a House* 6). Even Julian Wolfreys, while examining the end-of-century London in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), contends that the city may have the power to produce uncanny sensations on its own. Although Wolfreys argues that the instances in which

the uncanny appears are aporetic – as we are incapable of accurately ascertaining whether the city can cause them independently (*Inventions of the City* 27) – the implication still remains. Specifically, if said scholars can construe the two architectural constructs as anthropomorphized agents displaying malignant motivations, then it is surely not so far-fetched to see, as per Kaplan and Kloss's postulation, the protagonists that populate the chosen case studies as people possessing both conscious and unconscious content.

2. Spatiality and the City

Because of its various articulations, the concept of the city has always been a contested one. As Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson argue, a single narrative of a city does not simply exist – contrasting narratives construe cities differently, accentuating some aspects while wholly neglecting others ("City Imaginaries" 14). In line with their statement, different theoretical articulations can be said to offer different approaches to this complex concept. This is, perhaps, why recent decades have testified to an increasing interest in the study of the city, with scholars from social sciences, such as anthropology, geography, history, political sciences, and the fields of architecture, urban planning, and design, applying a range of analytical methods to reading the often-contested concept of the city. The unifying tendency of all of these diverse disciplines is to invalidate the immutability of the city and to argue that they are more than mere physical structures signifying, instead, structures of individual meaning. Put differently, attention has been directed away from the buildings, bricks, and blocks of different cities to the practices and experiences of its inhabitants. To contend that cities are places, and places are processes, the chapter will draw on Yi-Fu Tuan's arguments that inform the interpretative direction of the dissertation.

The city initially invokes the image of a "microcosmos," symbolizing a man-made structure that possesses tangible lucidity that nature lacks, or of one's "mother," sheltering its inhabitants' frailty from the outside flux (Tuan, *Space and Place* 100; 154). Specifically, as a man-made structure, the city's functions are prone to be changeable, as is evident from Tuan's observations mentioned above. Such a premise presupposes the positioning of the city as a relational category, continuously constructed and reconstructed by individual actions and interpersonal interactions. Accordingly, as an archive of meanings and achievements, the city is the place *par excellence* (Tuan, *Space and Place* 173). Yet, in his later publication, *Landscapes of Fear* (1979), Tuan states that the structures that should shelter their inhabitants are also able to threaten their lives precisely because, although all of the buildings, blocks, and streets are products of precise architectural planning, the city might still materialize as a cacophonous, disorderly, and disorienting labyrinth that mirrors the wild confusion and disorder of the outside world (146). In the chapter "Fear in the City," Tuan gives the example of *fin de siècle* London arguing that such sensations were intensified by the influx of criminals who claimed the dilapidated courts and alleys in the very center of the city and by

the "great unwashed," that is, the propertyless, less-than-citizens living in the slums, supposed carriers of the deadly *contagia* (*Landscapes of Fear* 161; 168). The ever-increasing industrial city, suffocating in pestilent stench, smothered by slaughterhouses, stables, shipyards, factories, and docks, and covered in fetid filth, had reversed, rather scarily, the place *par excellence* into a landscape of fear.

However, in my view, the ideas proposed in Tuan's publications are not opposed to each other but rather operate as a dialogue that offers two coexisting articulations of the city that simultaneously signifies a safe place of belonging and a space of anxiety. After all, these spaces of anxiety must have also symbolized a home for some. At the same time, these East End "rookeries" were asserted as blighted areas where even officers of the law were hesitant to venture, and where evildoers of all kinds operated out in the open (*Landscapes of Fear* 156). Since the city is characterized by myriad modes of aesthetic articulations, the subchapter aims at focusing its attention on *fin de siècle* London because it best manifests the beforementioned duality. The duality will be examined on the example of Stephen Hunter's novel *I, Ripper* (2015) and Richard Warlow's television series *Ripper Street* (2012-2016). The two neo-Victorian narratives[10] have been chosen based on their portrayal of the end-of-century city that fluctuates between being troped as menacingly monstrous and as a safe shelter to its surplus inhabitants. Although there are plenty of contemporary neo-Victorian narratives that could have been chosen in place of Warlow's *Ripper Street*, the series is surprisingly interesting in that it presents a never-ending pursuer versus pursued tension between its detectives and the numerous criminals that populate Whitechapel, while at the same time forgoing an almost archetypal preoccupation with the figure of the Ripper and focusing instead on the streets themselves, both visually and in terms of developing a multi-dimensional and intricate world by detailing the lives of its "surplus" inhabitants. As the series stretches over thirty-seven episodes, it can be considered a "cumulative" narrative in the tradition of Victorian serialized novels, which also allows for a detailed portrayal of its

[10] Hadley writes that since Victorian tropes are still prevalent in the twenty-first century, neo-Victorian fiction can be formulated as "contemporary fiction that engages with the Victorian era, at either the level of plot, structure, or both" (*Neo-Victorian Fiction and Historical Narrative* 4). It explores, reworks, and/or recreates the Victorian era. Furthermore, Hadley argues that "although neo-Victorian fictions share a concern with the Victorian past, the way that concern enters the fictional world can vary" (Ibid.).

characters and narrative arcs (Sconce qtd. in Weissmann 277). Because of its intricate world construction, Warlow also pays close attention to various spatial aspects that are of particular interest to the central argument of the dissertation, and which will be developed in the following subchapter. On the other hand, I wanted to balance a more radical departure from familiar *fin de siècle* tropes by including Hunter's *I Ripper*, which, as the title suggests, focuses primarily on the serial killer himself. Nonetheless, the numerous passages in which Ripper simply wanders, walks about, or actively investigates and scouts for suitable locations reveal that his nocturnal activities are always already placed in the East End and, thus, particularly relevant for investigating the relationship between places and monstrous individuals.

To discuss the city's alternative articulation, the subchapters will draw on Julian Wolfreys's seminal studies on *fin de siècle* London. In *Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* (2004), Wolfreys claims that the city of London cannot be seen as a place nor can it ever be placed – it represents a figure of superfluous fluidity, characterized by spatial and temporal singularities that assert its material multiplicity (4). Wolfreys's suggestion that there is no single shape or structure of the city invalidates its interpretation as an impermeable construct. Conversely, the city is repeatedly reproduced, and its embodiments are only ever temporal, that is, endless possibilities. It is caught in the process of perpetual in-betweenness that construes it as changeable. Therefore, the subchapters will weave their theoretical arguments around Tuan and Wolfreys because they both share a common tendency toward the perception of the city as continuously *becoming*, which is evident in the never-ending process of inscription between the individual and the setting. Recalling numerous London-based novels, such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and Arthur Conan Doyle's canon of Sherlock Holmes, Wolfreys writes that the late nineteenth-century city persists in popular imaginary as the locus of moral corruption, degeneracy, and decay; its labyrinth-like streets, plagued by "pea-souper" fogs, serving as exemplary sites for the monstrous, the hallucinatory, and the phantasmagoric (*Inventions of the City* 9; 12). Such projections are mainly mapped onto the area of the East End, the districts where working-class people lived, and the areas inhabited by immigrants, and assessed as sources of anxiety and contamination, necessitating nonstop police intervention (Wolfreys, *Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 37). In their formulaic *fin de siècle* form, the dark, damp, and fetid districts, with

their poorly maintained, desolate streets spiraling irrationally, shape a sensation of aesthetic distaste and emotions of disquiet that often extend to anxiety. Put simply, such a city conjures only sensations of otherness. It is construed as penetrable and, thus, susceptible to attack, intrusion, and infiltration, or anthropomorphized as an organic, devouring entity that autonomously perpetuates transgressions against its inhabitants, ejecting, as it were waste, the energies of those it has engulfed and spurned as surpluses, such as the homeless and the prostitutes (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 18). Nevertheless, Wolfreys warns that there was a hidden facet to London, a facet that has very often been obscured by the general focus on the binary oppositions between East and West End that are central to the analysis of the city at the end of the century (*Inventions of the City* 94), and that is often overlooked in dominant depictions of the East End that focus primarily on portraying poverty and crime as the defining conditions of life in the city.[11] Aside from analyzing whether the two chosen case studies reinforce or, perhaps, reinvent the end-of-century city, the subchapters aim at arguing that there is one figure that finds himself "at home" among its two articulations – the flâneur.

The figure of the flâneur is intrinsically linked to the concept of the city, simultaneously signifying a particular nineteenth-century literary phenomenon, an active aspect of peripatetic practices, and an approach toward the world whereby one's joy of observation is overwhelming in its intensity. In "Key Figure of Mobility: The Flâneur" (2017), Jaime Coates argues that both "flâneur" and "flânerie" appear across an array of different disciplines and represent decidedly different opportunities for the analysis of historical and contemporary urban life, and that the word itself was not formulated by a single scholar, but emerged in a specific European setting,[12] and has been revisited and reinterpreted by a number of different writers and theorists (29), such as Baudelaire 1972; Benjamin 1996;

[11] Numerous contemporary neo-Victorian narratives reproduce this imagery, such as Albert and Allan Hughes's film *From Hell* (2001), Tim Burton's film *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), John Logan's television series *Penny Dreadful* (2014-2016), and Barry Langford and Benjamin Ross's television series *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015-2017), to name just a few.

[12] Jaime Coates further elaborates that the figure of the flâneur first appeared in the mid-nineteenth-century *Physiologies*, a series of poems, short essays, and sketches that portrayed the Parisian society in a comical, yet witty manner (29). In the 1860s, the *Physiologies*, such as *Paris ou le Livre des Cent-et-Un* (1831-1834), inspired Charles Baudelaire's famous portrayal of "the flâneur as the artist-poet of the modern metropolis" (Ibid.).

McDonough 2002; Tester; 2014; Pankhurst, 2015, et cetera. Despite the figure's permanent popularity, its precise definition remains elusive, causing recent scholars to conclude that its relevance has, so to say, expired (Conlin qtd. in Coates 29).[13] While the relevance of the traditional flâneur may have "expired," the subchapters aim at assessing that the focus on the transgressive features of flânerie allows for an alternative definition of the figure as an active individual who no longer merely enjoys observing the city and its inhabitants, but becomes a pursuer who influences individuals surrounding him.[14] The figure initially introduced in Charles Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (1863), signified a "passionate spectator," whose "immense joy" was a result of his position "in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite" (9). By drawing on Baudelaire's observations, the two subchapters intend to illustrate both *I, Ripper*'s Thomas Dare and *Ripper Street*'s Edmund Reid as flâneurs insofar as they are aimlessly ambling about East End streets, passively absorbing images, individual actions, interpersonal interactions, and spatial figurations, thus achieving topographical connoisseurship of the city.

Yet, what clearly complicates the two characters' traditional formulation is the presence of preplanned activities. As will be argued, as soon as Reid starts actively paying attention to the city's topography, he transforms from a passive "stroller," "lounger," or "loafer," enthralled by the excitement of the swarming streets, into an astute pursuer, scanning the crowd for the threatening criminal. Once the passive observer begins "botanizing on the asphalt" (Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* 372), actively registering and recording images, interactions, and spatial figurations, he transcends the stagnant gaze of the "gaper," the

[13] Specifically, in "'This Public Sort of Obscurity:' The Origins of the Flâneur in London and Paris, 1660-1780" (2014), Jonathan Conlin writes, "It is high time that the flâneur withdrew into the obscurity which he so likes, and that we turn our attention to other figures, other voices" (qtd. in Coates 29).

[14] For example, in "Forget the Flâneur" (2013), Conor McGarrigle claims that the repeated retrofitting of Baudelaire's "jaded dandy" has overextended the concept of the flâneur whose current function is to fulfill nostalgic urges. The author argues that contemporary re-incarnations still depict him as a detached, male observer and that such passivity needs to be replaced with an alternative, more representative model that would focus on his potentially disruptive agency (25-26).

badaud.[15] Similarly, in instances in which Dare describes the process of immersing himself in the crowd, his initial formulation as a flâneur is superseded by the introduction of activities such as actively acquiring information. Further obscuring the traditional figuration is yet another factor observable in Walter Benjamin's writings according to which the flâneur features "the watchfulness of an observer who does not take his eyes off a miscreant . . . He catches things in flight" (*Charles Baudelaire* 41). The "watchfulness" and the capacity to "catch things in flight" are underlined with a feeling of uncertainty as to the figure's true intentions; after all, Benjamin accentuates that the figure transforms from a "philosophical promenader" into a "werewolf" in the wilderness of the metropolis (*The Arcades Project* 418). In *I, Ripper*, Dare's carefully choreographed dialogue among strolling and stalking allows for an alternative definition of the figure of the flâneur as a disruptive agent who demonstrates all of the predatory traits lurking beneath the façade of Benjamin's ostensibly benevolent figure. As for Reid, the complete immersion in the object of his observation, the crowd, is considered suspicious since the assiduous analysis of appearances is as much the task of detectives as of criminals. By focusing on the flâneur's cryptic connection to the object pursued Benjamin concluded, "No matter what traces the flâneur may follow, every one of them will lead him to a crime" (*The Writer of Modern Life* 72).

According to Tom McDonough's analysis of Benjamin's argument, first put forward in "The Crimes of the Flâneur" (2002), the flâneur's ambiguous relationship with crime adheres to the detective's because the detective pinpoints transgressions perpetrated in the urban city, uncovers the truth of its streets, and, afterward, the criminal hiding at its heart (105). As a true connoisseur of its topography, the flâneur-detective can reinstate communal order among its citizens.[16] Throughout *Ripper Street*'s first four seasons, Reid successfully

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[15] Benjamin writes, "In the flâneur, the joy of watching prevails over all. It can concentrate on observation; the result is the amateur detective. Or it can stagnate in the rubbernecker; then the flaneur has turned into a *badaud*" (*The Writer of Modern Life* 98-99). Compared to the flâneur, the amateur detective's powers of observation transform him from a "useless" figure without an aim into a useful one, thus validating his practices.

[16] McDonough writes, "threat haunted the bourgeois imaginary as a concatenation of all those forces – from ghetto uprisings to the more diffuse spread of a counter-culture with its rejection of normative models of social behavior – that threatened the middle-class hold over the city. Yet even greater than these political fears, and to a considerable extent acting as a mask for them, was the social anxiety that dominated the urban imaginary of this class: fear of crime" (116).

deals with disorder, catching a variety of criminals and restoring order in Whitechapel. Nonetheless, McDonough notes that the flâneur-detective can also convert into a criminal *par excellence*, "his wanderings through the city streets as themselves perhaps criminal acts, inevitably leading him into crime" (101). By reinterpreting Baudelaire's reading of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), where the flâneur-detective leaves his lookout in the café window and plunges into the crowd, captivated by the unknown man's physiognomy, McDonough proposes that the figure transforms from being an instrument of panoptic surveillance, initially committed to contemplating and converting the ambiguity of the crowd into a comforting clarity, into its very disturbance (106). Specifically, the pursuer versus the pursued binary disintegrates because the flâneur-detective's project is propelled by the "fatal, irresistible passion!" (Baudelaire qtd. in McDonough Ibid.) for the other that is, as the exclamation point emphasizes, passionate to the point of obsession.[17] It is, as McDonough declares, equally driven by both suspicion and longing (107). Accordingly, the *Ripper Street* subchapter aims at arguing that the figure of the flâneur-detective transforms from being an instrument of inspection into a disruptor. Reid's watchfulness, vigilance, and the capacity to catch things in flight are underlined with a feeling of uncertainty, implying that his spatial routines are subtended by *other*-oriented practices. However, his cryptic connection to the crime will be read as a direct result of the city's double articulation that demands two types of behaviors that oscillate between being law-abiding and transgressive.

While Reid only oscillates between asserting order and abusing it, Dare's trajectorial transformation culminates in his becoming a criminal *par excellence.* To construe Dare as an aggressive flâneur, the chapter will turn to Marko Lukić and Tijana Parezanović's recent re-interpretation of the prototypical serial killer, as proposed in "Strolling Through Hell: The Birth of the Aggressive Flâneur" (2016). Focusing on Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's graphic novel *From Hell* (1989), the two authors argue that the stroller can surpass the simple pleasure of observation by becoming an active consumer of the streets and, subsequently, the manufacturer of meaning (5). In their opinion, such change creates a split between William Gull, the renowned royal doctor to Queen Victoria, and William Gull, the serial killer (Ibid.).

[17] McDonough argues that to connect the "'crimes of the flâneur' with Baudelaire's 'fatal, irresistible passion' is not to propose some transhistorical category of flânerie" but to partially reinvent the paradigm, presenting the figure as "another sort of 'man of the crowd,' simultaneous detective and criminal" (113; 120).

The authors argue that such a division does not create a *doppelgänger* because the concept of the double is archetypally defined by an antagonism between the two personas, as is apparent in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). Rather, it is replaced by dissociative identity disorder, facilitating "a functional and complementary coexistence" of the figure of the flâneur and the serial killer (2). The authors also argue that the seeming digression from "the semblance of flâneurialism" is still not opposed to the theoretical development of the figure (Ibid). Therefore, following the two authors' framework that broadens the conceptual boundaries that have both confined and construed the flâneur as an overused and nowadays superfluous figure, the first subchapter will argue that Dare's transformation from a passive stroller into an active stalker – and finally into a serial murderer – institutes the inimical split between two separated personas. Afterward, it will apply Havi Carel's recent reformulation of Freud's death drive to define Dare's demeanor as sadism.

Ousting the object-libido/ego-libido and the ego/sexual drives opposition, Freud introduced the life drive/death drive dualism, describing the former as self-sustaining and independent of the latter – although the two may also infrequently merge. Freud was intent on asserting a dialectical drive model, although it kept collapsing. Furthermore, contrary to Freud, who was averse to explicitly acknowledging the existence of the aggressive drive, thus provoking subsequent scholars to spurn it and/or perceive it as purely speculative, Carel has recently reformulated the Freudian death drive as "death drives," a "coherent concept of annihilative aggression" (*Life and Death* 38). Seeing said "drives" as plural signifies that these "aggressive phenomena" are intrinsically interrelated and, at the same time, different (52). Yet, they are "conjoined through their shared tendency towards destruction," directed inwards, such as with self-aggression, or outwards, which appears as aggressive acting-out projected onto others (52; 53). The two subchapters will be principally focused on the second phenomena of sadism, asserted as aggression directed toward the destruction of others, present in Dare's and, in the second subchapter, in Arthur Donaldson's and Claxton's behavioral patterns. Death drives are experienced as endless tension driving a person toward a particular internal and/or external object. Aggressive acting-out leads to liberation from said tension and a sense of satisfaction that is always already temporal, testifying to a relation between the act of releasing and the compulsion to repeat the act (8). Thus, all of the three antagonists display a tendency toward recurrent release. Drawing on Carel's deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism, death drives are also accompanied by a degree of narcissistic

enjoyment (28). As will be argued, the primary purpose of Dare's, Donaldson's, and Claxton's aggressive acting-out is acquiring pleasure. According to Michel Foucault's theoretical articulations, the marker of moral monstrosity is attributed to precisely such individuals who violate social pacts, rules, and norms, prioritizing their own interests over societal laws – they are incapable of social integration, choose chaos over order, commit "extravagant or extraordinary acts," despise morality, deny the laws governing it, and "are capable of resorting to crime" and committing cruel acts (7; 65). The two subchapters' concluding argument is that these antagonists, while committing atrocious acts of mutilation and murder, inscribe the topography of East End with the marker of moral monstrosity. Following Lukić and Parezanović's postulation that the spaces that once shaped the stroller's experiences are overthrown by the serial killer's aggressive drives (6), and phenomenology's and human geography's premise according to which places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, the subchapters aim at arguing that the marker of monstrosity cannot be a particular place's *a priori* property. East End's atmospheric and architectural conditions allow for the articulation of monstrosity that, in turn, contributes to construing that same setting as monstrous. Therefore, the subchapters aim at arguing that the relationship between the East End and these figures of transgression is cyclical.

2.1. Stephen Hunter's *I, Ripper* (2015)

After presenting the premise of the novel, the subchapter will open with a discussion on the author's depiction of the end-of-the-century city of London.[18] In accordance with Julian Wolfreys's theoretical articulations, it will argue that the city's portrayal, although paradigmatically stereotypical, also asserts it as a simultaneous space-place. The atmospheric conditions of the city, which provoke phantasmagoric sensations in the inhabitants, the apparent architectural irrationality, the inhuman living conditions that clearly destroy individual identities, and the presence of a threatening crowd - all these elements evoke the feeling of otherness. And yet there is one figure who feels "at home" in the midst of this irrationality and is fully integrated into the topography – the flâneur. Following in the

[18] At the time of writing the dissertation, there were no published articles relating to Stephen Hunter's *I, Ripper* (2015).

footsteps of Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Tom McDonough, Marko Lukić and Tijana Parezanović, the subchapter will underline Thomas Dare's trajectorial transformation from a passive stroller into an active stalker, and, finally, into a serial killer. After arguing that the transformation institutes the inimical split between two separate personalities, the chapter will draw on Havi Carel's recent reformulation of Freud's drive theory to define Dare's behavior as sadism, or the destruction aimed at another to achieve satisfaction. After asserting Dare as a moral monster as per Michel Foucault's postulation, it will attempt to argue that monstrosity is not the city's *a priori* characteristic. Following Lukić and Parezanović's statement that the serial killer's drives subvert the spaces that once shaped the stroller's experience (6), and phenomenology's and human geography's premise that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, the subchapter will analyze the relationship between the city and the troubling figure of transgression. In other words, it will investigate whether Dare inscribes East End's topography with the marker of moral monstrosity, thus translating its streets to loci of abjection.

Between August 31 and November 9, 1888, Jack the Ripper murdered and, afterward, mutilated five prostitutes in the impoverished areas in and around the Whitechapel district of London, disappearing after the particularly shocking slaying of one Mary Jane Kelley – her head hacked into an abominable ruin, her throat severed to the spine, her abdomen almost emptied of all organs, with viscera splattered across the walls of her bedroom and placed beneath her head, feet, and upon a bedside table. The mysterious Whitechapel murderer has haunted the corners of the collective imagination ever since, embodying the paradigm of the psychopathic serial killer. Today he is remembered not only for his five canonical murders and mutilations but because he was never caught despite one of the greatest police efforts in London history. Stephen Hunter's *I, Ripper* (2015) is a fictional, although factual,[19] reimagining of Jack the Ripper cases through three contrasting perspectives. Apart from Jeb, a music critic for London's evening tabloid *Star* who is offered an opportunity to cover and chart the case of Judys supposedly slaughtered by the infamous "Leather Apron," Hunter introduces the imagined diary of Jack himself, along with letters from the gin-addicted Mary

[19] In the novel's annex, Hunter affirms how he remained well within the consensus regarding the so-called Autumn of the Knife. He provides extensive bibliographical entries that have helped his novel to remain as historically accurate as possible.

Jane Kelley, Jack's final fatality. Contrary to the well-received retellings of the Ripper myth,[20] the murders are not characterized as motivated by a royal cover-up conspiracy but by revenge.[21] Ultimately, Jeb unearths that the upper-class university professor Thomas Dare, initially determined in convincing Jeb that Jack's methodical approach to the murders is confirmation enough that the criminal is a former British military officer, is, in fact, the infamous Ripper himself.

Wolfreys writes that *fin de siècle*'s portrayals of the city permeate contemporary perceptions and projections, its each and every embodiment announcing that it is always already there (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 27-28). Substantiating Wolfreys's statement are repeated reinterpretations of the Jack the Ripper tale, resolutely located in London's East End, and appearing according to archetypal tropes, images, and motifs.[22] In other words, in line with the late nineteenth-century portrayals of the city, Hunter asserts an apparent visual antithesis among its West and East End. The city is paradigmatically stereotypical, thus presented as spatially segregated – while West London symbolizes social elegance and innocence, East London is the locus of the absolutely abject, inhabited by propertyless immigrants, petty criminals, and prostitutes, or Judys, selling themselves to satisfy their gin-addiction. It can be argued that these characters are the *only* true East Enders, precisely because they provide, as Wolfreys writes, a phatic snapshot of contemporary culture

[20] For example, in Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's graphic novel, *From Hell* (1989), Sir William Whitey Gull, a famed Freemason and a royal physician to Queen Victoria, is posited as the principal perpetrator of the Jack the Ripper murders. Initially, the murders were a means to conceal the existence of an illegitimate son whom Prince Albert fathered with Annie Crook, a shopgirl in East End. After Queen Victoria consigns Annie to an asylum, instructing Dr. Gull to impair her sanity, a group of prostitutes – Mary Kelly, Polly Nichols, Anne Chapman, and Elizabeth Stride – begin blackmailing the royal family, threatening to expose the events that transpired. Dr. Gull is, once again, enlisted, this time to silence Annie's associates who are endangering the enduring institution of the crown.

[21] In the novel, Thomas Dare ridicules the idea that "the blood of whores was some part of some ritual in the cabala that I suppose was to make Baron Rothschild the richest man in the world again twice over" (Hunter 118).

[22] Besides the aforementioned Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's graphic novel *From Hell* (1989), and Albert and Allan Hughes' homonymous film adaptation from 2001, there have been ample adaptations of Jack the Ripper tale, including Robert Bloch's *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper* (1943), Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* (1992), Lyndsay Faye's *Dust and Shadow* (2009), to name just a few.

(*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 9). That is, their marginal presence provides a microscopic representation of nineteenth-century East End society, in which the poorest of the poor were spatially segregated, confined to exclusionary sectors for fear that they would somehow taint the wealthy West Londoners. Furthermore, while West London is illuminated, indicating Victorian values, commerce, and, by implication, civilization, East London is plunged in perpetual darkness, suffocating in pestilent stench, indicating, in turn, the end of civilization. The performative persistence of *fin de siècle*'s portrayals of East End testifies to its, as Wolfreys writes, "khoralike function," whereby a particular space exhibits an erratic silhouette, staging anything and everything that is transgressive (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 40). East End is marked by illicitness, which, as Wolfreys writes, initially materializes as the "moral corruption and degeneracy" of its criminal "underworld" (*Inventions of the City* 9). Still, it should be argued that said function also facilitates the perception of East End as a safe place that primarily shelters prohibited practices, such as prostitution and petty criminality, conducted by the less fortunate and, in the case of the former, frequently consumed by the middle and upper classes. Specifically, it is not only a nightmarish setting characterized by nighttime, criminal activities, although Dare outlines its otherworldliness by describing it as "another planet" permeated by "another atmosphere," and populated by "another range of life-forms" (Hunter 152). As a place of nefarious pleasures and disreputable delights, East End lures the middle and upper classes to escape exact Victorian values and satisfy their illicit inclinations. After all, Jeb implies that all individuals went to Whitechapel in search of something, be it prostitutes, public houses, minstrels, magic shows, or anomalies of nature, such as conjoined twins (61). In such instances, the issue of spatial segregation is overcome because the East End becomes inhabited by criminals and cultured alike.

Hunter devotes ample attention to detailing East End's detrimental aspects, asserting it as a Babylonian, bleak, far-off, forgotten, and discordant district – its Sodom and Gomorrah-like streets are submerged in sexual squeals, grunts, and gasps and permeated by the pungent odor of horse ordure, human excrement, garbage, seminal fluid, urine, and blood. Aside from stressing the stench of methane and the sounds of throbbing, shoving, slipping, and shuffling caused by the greatest concern of nineteenth-century England, "the flesh and sperm trade" (223), Hunter establishes the darkness of East End's damp and fetid districts. While the adjective "dark" appears around forty times throughout the novel, fortifying the adverse

atmospheric condition of its streets (13; 35; 89; 137; 151; 263; 269; 327; 335), alleys (327; 355), avenues (63), blocks (69), corners (153; 277), nooks (195), roads (43), places (57), and passages and passageways (63; 69), the noun "darkness" appears around twenty times, always in association with the nefarious night-time activities of Jack the Ripper. In one such instance, East End is characterized as "a canyon of darkness" (137), the glutinous glare of pulsating gaslights, shops, and saloons projecting phantasmagorical sensations among its visitors. Wolfreys writes that the night surpasses its primary status as a simple setting, promising to open up "a sensate rather than a strictly knowable world" to the observer of the city (*Inventions of the City* 38). In such scenes, the city loses all spatial and temporal coherence, evident in Hunter's explanation that the tension between the absence and presence of illumination produced "a crazed effect of chiaroscuro" (327). Thus, it can be said that the primary purpose of such crepuscular scenes is to create an articulation of the city that assumes a temporary existence, obscuring one's perception. By obscuring one's perception, such scenes perpetrate incomprehensible impressions and signs, producing otherworldly sensations. The contrast inherent in Hunter's invocation of the chiaroscuro technique creates a distinct *demimonde* on its own, requiring a phenomenological response that relies on experiencing things rather than on empirically observing them. This is evident in Hunter's explanation that the chiaroscuro affected an emotional reaction without invoking specific visual imagery (325). The city's atmospheric configuration submerges its citizens in a sensation of otherworldliness, adverse to different forms of domestication and familiarization and, as Wolfreys writes, such scenes rule out rational perception and produce a phobic sensation among its unaccustomed, middle and upper-class visitors (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 45). Adding to such a sensation is the all-enveloping combination of coal fumes and fog, smearing the streets in shades of yellow. The fog further intensifies the dialectic between the visible and the invisible. Wolfreys writes that a single mention of fog is not enough; the motif of the fog must be repeatedly reintroduced for it to achieve its full potential of obfuscation (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 75). In the novel, there are repeated references to the fog (61; 235; 335; 389) that further intensify its effect, asserting the city's atmospheric coloration and, as Wolfreys so rightfully observes, its otherworldliness.

This otherworldliness becomes even clearer when one considers the absurdity of East End's spatial topography. As Wolfreys argues, the repeated recurrence of architectural forms provokes a feeling of paralyzing disorientation and accompanying confusion (*Materiality,*

Memory, Spectrality 16). This is best discernable in one of Dare's descriptions: "This had to be Duke . . . I took the darker option and came shortly thereupon – insane! – another Duke Street. It was therefore at the corner of Duke and Duke . . . I could not suppress the grin at the absurdity of such a thing and the centuries of confusion it must have engendered" (Hunter 159). However, this is not an isolated instance. Elsewhere, Hunter portrays East End as absent of particular styles, pedigrees, and architectural patterns: its mud-covered, cobblestone thoroughfares are thoroughly chaotic, and its miserable accommodations, mainly brick boxes altogether indistinguishable from one another, are confusedly sprouting all across the city's clogged streets that often turn into rivulets of muck. Of course, all of these characteristics convey the elemental nineteenth-century English condition – poverty. Also, the reader does not notice many streets described in detail. For example, Dare explains that: "the street names meant nothing, nor should they; all were alike, tiny streets of humble brick abodes linked in long ungainly strands, sporting a castellation of chimneys, poorly lit" (265). A lack of detailed descriptions of street scenes and the dull, almost paralyzing, duplication of its spatial structures signifies that East End is construed as absent of district-specific denominators. Namely, the impossibility to navigate through its structures implies a spatial infinity that stretches into the unknown, underlining the conception of London as an "unreal" city.[23] Hunter's helter-skelter streets limn London's skeletal form, which is always already fading. Such topographical troping affords access to the city's secrets or, perhaps, the secret city, making visible its invisible underworld (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 45; 49). Although recognition appears immediate, the city remains resistant to interpretation and rationalization.

According to Wolfreys's argument, East End's labyrinth-like topography also promotes the city's disorienting condition that dismantles individuals' identities, ejecting as if it were waste the energies of those it has engulfed, and, afterward, spurned as surpluses (*Inventions of the City* 18). The surplus person *par excellence* is the prostitute, whom Hunter describes as the disposable dreg of the system, not belonging to the dark-garbed, earnest Empire of rectitude (50). Precisely, the biological processes of consuming and, afterward,

[23] In *London: The Biography* (2000), Peter Ackroyd claims that such conceptions of London have a long history: "Nymphs have been seen along the banks of its rivers, and minotaurs within its labyrinths of brick . . . It has been the home of both angels and devils striving for mastery. It has been the seat of miracles, and a harbor of savage paganism" (771).

ejecting do not exemplify the existence of an autonomous agency that would posit the city as an all-devouring, mythical monster. Though it is tempting to anthropomorphize the East End, the insights into the lives of its poorest inhabitants emphasize that their poverty is a by-product of the city and, to a larger extent, of the Empire that is apathetic to their existence. After all, Hunter explains that Mary Ann Nichols's wretched reality was "exactly as expected" in an environment absent of empathy that allows for such colossal cruelty and, afterward, rejects her without reluctance,

> it [the city] erodes them swiftly, it takes their singularity, their character, what wit they have, what memories, what hopes, what dreams. . . It's the trade, it's the gin, it's the nightly ritual of finding a posture in which to be penetrated easily, it's the disease, it's the closing of the horizons, it's the crush of destiny, *it's the immense indifference of society, of civilization*. (224; emphasis added)

Thus, the conditions of living in London's poorest areas provoke an impersonal and inhuman discomfort, incompatible with the lives of the characters who are condemned to either becoming criminals or being destroyed by the city. Despite its depiction as the "grinder of the flesh" (223), the city is not monstrous *per se,* but it exists in partial conformity with the monster. Not unlike the monster, which exists to be read (Cohen 4), the city both demands and thwarts a decoding of its illegibility. This unresolvable tension leads to an antagonism between anxiety and desire and underscores the sense of its utter unknowability. Wolfreys writes that the city's radically abyssal and archaic heterogeneity mark it as mutable and, in turn, monstrous (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 9; 10). In this regard, the city is monstrous insofar as it eludes definition. Adding to the all-pervading sensation of anxiety is another group of individuals whom Hunter specifies as surplus – the immigrants.

In addition to the Chinese, Indians, impulsive Irish Paddies devoted to drinking and displaying violence, Germans, "Russkies," and Slavs, Hunter devotes ample attention to depicting the perpetual dread provoked by the presence of the Jewish community among the members of the middle and upper classes, portraying them as "bogeymen of the popular press, demons of the working-class imagination, devils of the retail exchange, depraved and violent in folk rumor . . . detested for lacking fairness and physical beauty and portrayed everywhere as hook-nosed, yellow-skinned, shawl-wearing, matzoh-ball eating vermin" (257). By identifying East End immigrants as "demons, "devils," and "vermin," Hunter microscopically

mirrors the Empire's anxiety of the Other, prevalent in *fin de siècle*'s portrayals of London. According to Wolfreys's argument, the Other, localized as the East End Londoner, provokes anxiety because he has the power of transgressive incursion into both individual and collective identity (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 41). Precisely, the immigrant poses a potential threat to the understanding of the "proper" urban self, as symbolized by the middle- and upper-class West Londoners. This is evident in Jeb's explanation according to which "the large influx of them [Jews] excited anger, fear that they would bring alien ways to old Albion" (Hunter 86). The formulation of the foreigner endangering the Empire's established identity is fortified by the initial implication of Jack the Ripper being a Jewish immigrant. This threatening aspect is asserted by Hunter's predatory portrayal of the immigrant's physical peculiarities, highlighted by his "hooked-nose" that is characteristic of a carnivorous bird of prey. Such portrayal affirms alterity, aligning him with the paradigmatically stereotyped description of his fellow countrymen as physically different. Therefore, Hunter's representation of the East End as a "jungle" (157) refers to its chaotic and confusing structure and, at the same time, to its potentially deviant and dangerous Jewish inhabitants. Another element adding to the enduring anxiety of the city is the fearsome, flashing, and rumbling crowd. Tuan states that the "maddened human mob" is akin to the all-devouring fire in that they both threaten to shatter physical and social boundaries (*Landscapes of Fear* 156). Hunter characterizes the East End crowd as undergoing uncomfortable tension due to the proclamation of Jack the Ripper's potential identity as a Jew (77; 87). This tension transforms into anger and, afterward, cruelty as crowds of brutes began roaming Whitechapel and roughing up Jewish immigrants. As Jeb explains,

> The Jewish fear grew . . . Anti-Jewish graffiti began to appear mysteriously on tenement walls and storefronts. A very uncomfortable tension, palpable and unsettling, began to course through the lower orders . . . and violence was in the air. If our killer was a Jew, killing on some kind of twisted religious grounds, I had no idea what mischief might be released. (87-88)

The all-devouring fury of the "lower orders" resembles the relentless power of fire, which, as Tuan argues, threatens to consume the carefully constructed architectural containers of the city (*Landscapes of Fear* 156). Consequently, all of the above-discussed denominators – East End's atmospheric conditions that evoke phantasmagoric sensations among its

population, its architectural irrationality, evident in the absence of district-specific denominators, and the serial duplication of its spatial structures that specifies it as a disorienting labyrinth, its inhumane living conditions that can dismantle individual identities and spurn them as surpluses, and the presence of the threatening crowd – fortify the conception of the city as a landscape of fear. Originally built to eliminate the disorder and chaos of the outside world, the city turns into a threatening environment. Its spatial structures, instead of sheltering its inhabitants, evoke a frightening experience of estrangement (Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear* 147). Still, it can be argued that the end-of-the-century city is conclusively dual, simultaneously symbolizing a space-place. Specifically, while the dark-garbed and devoted subject of the Empire perceives it as menacingly monstrous, there is one figure that finds himself "at home" among its irrationality – the flâneur.

Thomas Dare is initially introduced as an upper-class, prominent professor of phonetics at the University of London who aims at assisting *Stars*' rising reporter Jeb in uncovering the mystery of the East End murderer. At first, professor Dare attempts to convince Jeb that Jack's careful approach to the murders is confirmation that the criminal is a seasoned military officer who had served in the Crimean War – Colonel Woodruff. However, Jeb ultimately uncovers that Jack the Ripper is none other than the professor himself. In sections of the novel that represent Ripper's diary, Dare writes that he was "whimsically wandering," "taking a stroll," "taking pleasure in the city at night," "strolling haphazardly" and "perambulating in a slow, easeful way" (Hunter 205; 223). Such practices signify the passivity of the stroller enthralled by the excitement of the swarming East End streets. Following the theoretical articulations of flânerie, this passivity points toward a manner of walking that does not have a decisive principle of organization and a spatially oriented outcome, that is, a precise arrival point. Still, in instances in which Dare describes the process of immersing himself in the crowd, "partaking, enjoying, meandering, observing and, one supposes, *gathering*" (67; emphasis added), one can observe the presence of a premeditated plan. Therefore, Dare's initial formulation as a flâneur, innocently ambling about, admiring the cacophonous city scenes, and soaking up the surrounding crowd, is superseded by introducing intentional activities such as gathering information. Dare is consciously committed to converting the ambiguity of East End's crowd into a comforting clarity, studying, and subsequently, minutely mapping its labyrinth-like streets. The whimsical walker without a destination is a meticulously detailed mask to obscure *other*-oriented practices,

safely buried beneath the supposedly "innocent" surface of purposeless or aimless strolling. The enactment of these practices is facilitated by three factors – the professor's physicality, his choice of nondescript clothing, and his social status. Precisely, Dare describes himself as having an average appearance, absent of peculiar attributes that would differentiate him from other West End visitors. He says, "I was as normal a bloke as you could imagine . . . I walked through crowds, shoulders back, head erect, my garb not at all theatricalized along with West End variations on cunning evil . . . I had a fair, somewhat blocky face, hair of modest attainment and wouldn't be caught dead in a top hat" (205). By wearing the universal uniform of Victoria's Empire, formal frock coats and gloves that generate the appearance of a gentleman, Dare can invisibly and inconspicuously detect, decipher, and obtain complete connoisseurship of the city that consists of familiarity with the streets, knowledge of police pattern, the density of traffic, and the drift of crowd. His social status as an upper-class citizen facilitates his fluctuation between the two socially segregated sections of London. After all, middle and upper-class men frequently fled to the East End district to pursue various prohibited pleasures. Unsurprising of presence, the professor becomes invisible both in the physical and social sense. He is someone whom all could observe, of high station or low, and see absolutely nothing.

Consequently, Dare's carefully choreographed dialogue between strolling and, as he says, unobtrusively scouting (137) and carefully stalking (225), allows for an alternative definition of the figure of the flâneur as an active pursuer, seeking to influence his individuals who surround him. The once-observer turned perceptive pursuer embodies the predatory traits lurking beneath the benevolent façade of Benjamin's flâneur whose "watchfulness," that is, complete immersion in the object of his observation, and the capacity to "catch things in-flight" potentially posit him as "werewolf" (*The Arcades Project* 418). Such transgressive features of flânerie facilitate Dare's simultaneous self-identification as a cultivated upper-class stroller and a predatory pursuer who perceives East End as his hunting area (Hunter 111; 153). Thus, the flâneur's passive practice of strolling is soon superseded by the pre-planned movements of the stalker. Specifically, the stalker's acute observational skills signify a multi-layered method of grasping and appropriating the myriad signs of East End's labyrinthine spaces. After all, Jeb says: "He [Dare] plans well, scouts thoroughly, and memorizes routes in and out" (241). Aside from the three factors that facilitate the fluctuation between strolling and stalking, Dare is also concealed by the crowd. In accordance with the theoretical

articulations of flânerie, Dare is formulated as a threshold type, simultaneously belonging and not belonging to a particular place, "on the one side, the man who feels himself viewed by all and sundry as a true suspect and, on the other side, the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man" (Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* 420). This dialectical opposition is observable in Dare's continuous suspicion of standing out in the thinning crowd (Hunter 69) that, in the end, turns out to be unfounded as he merges seamlessly with the upper-class citizens, Johns, and Judys. The forest of shadows, formed by groups of anonymous citizens regularly gathering and strolling East End's streets, completely conceals Dare's identity. The professor is also protected by the popular press's portrayal of "Jack the Ripper" persona that construes him as a creeping, shadowy skulker, slithering through the streets in his black clothes and topper hat while clutching an Oriental blade in his hands. Nineteenth-century England, ever-so enamored of the bourgeoisie, does not doubt the foreignness of the figure. In other words, one group of individuals generally identifies him as an Asian, Russian, Polish, or Chinese immigrant. Another group sees a striking resemblance to Bram Stoker's Dracula, construing him as a creepy skulker with a cadaverous face, sunken eyes, and pointed teeth. Such a primeval analogy draws attention to his ability to travel through the crepuscular city unseen, silently slithering through its labyrinth-like structure. The myth of the foreign, animal-like lurker that permeates popular imagination mediates Dare's metaphorical and literal incursion into the domestic space of the three classes. While the former is facilitated by the circulation of the press, which, with its intentionally appalling descriptions of Dare's abhorrent actions, threatens the righteous purity of the upper and middle-class hearthside, the latter is accomplished by Dare himself. Echoing the physical violation of his victims, the professor presents these domestic incursions as penetrations (Hunter 339). Dare can move through East End's streets effortlessly, and, most importantly, he can enter its houses and homes unseen. Thus, the houses of the prostitutes that should, in principle, symbolize a haven that shelters them from the excruciating conditions of surviving in the city, exist only to be violated.

Furthermore, drawing inspiration from Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's graphic novel *From Hell* (1989), Lukić and Parezanović postulate that the potentiality to surpass the pleasure that the stroller obtains from observation by becoming a conscious consumer of the streets and, afterward, an active manufacturer of meaning, creates a split between William Gull, the renowned royal doctor, and William Gull, the serial killer (5). This trajectorial transformation is apparent in Dare's aforementioned progression from a passive stroller to an

active stalker and, finally, to a serial killer. Precisely, the progression institutes the inimical split between the two separated personas – the prominent, upper-class professor and the merciless serial murderer. The authors then argue that such a split does not create a *doppelgänger* because the concept of the double is archetypally delineated by an antagonism between the two personas. Instead, it is replaced by dissociative identity disorder, facilitating their functional and complementary coexistence (2). Jeb questions the plausibility of such an inimical split between the two separated parts of one's personality by wondering if Jack is "someone similar to Robert Louis Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde. . . Perhaps, as in the Scotts fiction, the one did not know of the other" (Hunter 189). Conversely, Dare dismisses the concept of the *doppelgänger* by saying:

> I think Louis Stevenson simplified it by making each unaware of the other's presence. No, no, it's a matter of integration, merger, that somehow the 'Beneath' takes over and manipulates the sentient. The Beneath, I believe, is like the iceberg, the seventh tenths that lurk beneath the water. It is, therefore, the more powerful, the more masterful, the more brilliant. (417)

Interestingly, the professor's interpretation of the phenomena positively invokes Freud's topographical model of the mind that depicts it as divided into three separate sections – the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious. In line with Freud's three-level theory, Dare observes the conscious, consisting of metal processes that one is aware of at all moments, as constituting merely the tip of the iceberg. He visualizes the "Beneath," understood as the unconscious, as occupying "seven-tenths" of the total mind model. The professor then proposes that the "Beneath" transcends the "sentient" or, specifically, the conscious content, transforming into its "more powerful" constituent. He does not discuss how this transformation happens, stating instead that it happens "somehow." If observed through the lens of Freud's theory, one's unconsciousness consists of content that is latent but can become conscious, and of repressed content that cannot reach consciousness on its own. Furthermore, even though the latter is sharply separated from the ego by "resistances of repression," Freud argues that these resistances are always already temporal as the content preserves its impetus to penetrate consciousness – specifically, the content can communicate "with the ego through the id" ("The Ego and the Id" 23). As will be argued, the resistance is overthrown at the moment Dare commits the murders that, in turn, reawaken the impulse for

mutilation. The subchapter, therefore, aims at specifying the "Beneath" that "takes over" and "manipulates the sentient" as the drive toward death and destruction, observable in Dare's aggressive acting-out aimed at another, and his tendency toward repetition.[24]

Dare's former friend, Colonel Woodruff, claims that both the murders and monstrous mutilations were motivated by revenge. During their time together, Dare decided to save a prostitute from the streets, turning her into his personal project. In the attempt to teach her how to talk like an upper-class lady, the professor employed excruciating methods; he abused her verbally and, later, physically, beating her and chaining her in his basement. After remodeling her according to his requirements, he started showcasing her to his peers like a trophy and, ultimately, fell in love with her. Unable to watch the unnamed woman's abuse, Colonel Woodruff helped her devise an escape from the professor. Although Dare admits to being betrayed by the two, he argues that his actions were brought about by "*impulse, undeniable desire, and total and compelling need*" (Hunter 417). Dare's rejection of revenge as a meaningful motive, and his emphasis on the existence of an inclination for the fulfillment of an all-compelling impulse/desire/need, facilitates the application of Carel's reformulation of Freud's death drives in reading Dare's demeanor.

Carel positions death drives as plural, interpreting their derivatives as interrelated, connected by their common tendency toward destruction, such as with self-aggression, that is, masochism, or outwards, appearing as aggressive acting-out discharged onto others, that is, sadism (52; 53). Contrary to most contemporary adaptations, the novel does not merely depict the crimes committed against East End prostitutes but details their gruesome bodily desecration. Dare describes his tendency toward violent vivisection in several scenes, saying how he pierced Mary Nichols's flaccid flesh, cutting through the abdomen and the liquid-like coil of the bowels to the pubic bone (26), cut open Annie Chapman's cavity all the way to the anus, excavating everything from the stomach and flipping the slippery intestines over his shoulders (75), artistically cut around the half-circumference of Elizabeth Stride's neck (138), severed Catherine Eddowes's cavity, cutting through the cartilage and sawing the slithery

[24] To frame the death drive as the fundamental element of the unconscious, the subchapter draws on Carel's argument according to which the "instinctual origin of the drive makes it part of the id, which is largely unconscious" (125).

tubes, and took a heaping handful of feculent-smelling entrails, tossing them over her shoulder (156), and, in a delirium of destruction, cut open Mary Jane Kelley's guts, tossing the glistening coils across the bedroom, torn the tights and the abdomen to the bare bone, broke her breastbone, and took her heart as a souvenir (355-356). Apart from these anatomically precise punctures, Dare brutally destroyed both Eddowes's and Kelley's faces. Namely, he stabbed Eddowes's face until the blade began to slip from the skull below (159). He also swiveled, pulled, poked, stabbed, and shredded Kelley's nose, cheeks, eyebrows, and eyes, eventually cutting her lips down to her chin (357). The often-contested concept of "evil" used to describe Dare's behavior is, therefore, better described as aggressive behavior projected onto others. According to Carel's theoretical articulation, the prevalent phenomena of *I, Ripper* is that of sadism, definable as destruction aimed at another. Carel argues that all drives are decidedly cyclic as the diversity of their expression emphasizes that they do not have a definitive aim (8). Testifying to the fact that the aggressive acting-out was absent of an aim is Dare's testimony, according to which he hacked without a higher purpose or plan, focusing only on inflicting as much malice as possible (Hunter 357). The tendency toward physical mutilation arises after the act of murder as an unconscious urge that demands unspecified discharge – be it cutting, sawing, smashing, or stabbing. After all, Dare explicitly states that he embodies slaughter and destruction for *its own* sake (65; emphasis added). Additionally, the drives are only ever temporarily satisfied, testifying to an interrelation among themselves and repetition compulsion (Carel 8; 120). If drives require repeated release, it is understandable that Dare describes an almost obsessive desire to destroy (Hunter 27). Once the acting-out of said drives is achieved, Dare's drive toward aggression is discharged and, afterward, replaced by a feeling of gratification.

Yet, such a sensation is always already temporal, requiring repeated discharge. Although the murders are premeditated because they are motivated by revenge, the demand for physical destruction is impulsive and inexplicable. After all, the professor cannot provide a conclusive motive for the mutilations: "I needed to puncture her more. Why? God in heavens knows" (27). Furthering the idea of the demand's impulsiveness is the fact that Dare, during these brutal desecrations, becomes almost delirious and incapable of stopping himself (25; 159). These instances invoke Freud's three-level theory, portraying the process of the aforementioned "Beneath," or the unconscious, usurping the conscious. After all, the professor writes that there was darkness worming its way to the center of his brain,

demanding expression (355). The "Beneath" is also described as a devouring "beast" (19) that Dare had no choice but to release. According to Carel's deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism, death drives are also always already accompanied by extensive narcissistic enjoyment (28). Contrary to contemporary adaptations of the Jack the Ripper myth, such as the aforementioned graphic novel *From Hell*, Hunter is not interested in rationalizing Dare's demeanor and representing it as a part of the royal cover-up plan. Although the murders might be motivated by revenge, the brutal bodily desecrations are described as producing pleasure, bringing about both "exquisite" (26), "strange" (27), and "sensual" (Ibid.) sensations, affirming the idea that aggressive acting-out contains the component of satisfaction brought about by sadism.

Thus, it is safe to say that the primary purpose of the professor's aggressive acting out is the acquisition of pleasure. According to Foucault's theoretical explanations, the stamp of moral monstrosity is placed on precisely those individuals who prefer their own interests over respect for and adherence to social rules and norms. Specifically, such individuals choose chaos to order, commit extravagant or extraordinary acts, and often resort to crimes and acts of violence (7; 65) – such as murder and subsequent bodily mutilation. Dare is initially introduced as a remarkably attractive individual, boasting wavy blond hair and an aquiline profile reminiscent of a high-ranking representative of the aristocracy. Thus, monstrosity is not materialized as a physical manifestation of the unnatural but is characterized by the irregularity of interests that motivate Dare's aberrant actions. Although Foucault asserts that aberrant individuals are incapable of social integration, it is important to indicate that the previously discussed dissociative identity disorder eases Dare's concurrent existence as an upper-class citizen and a serial murderer. Specifically, Dare is so successful in his subsequent persona because he is protected by his performance as a well-known, respectable professor. As for Foucault's remaining denominators, Dare repeatedly reasserts his tendency toward chaos and corruption (Hunter 103), executes murders and excessive mutilations (26; 75; 138, etc.), asserts morality as appalling and altogether insignificant (97; 367), disobeys the rules of both bar and civilization (19),[25] and, at least temporarily, frees himself from the filaments and

[25] For example, Jeb explains that Jack "was what we left behind when we moved indoors, he was the beast of the heart, he was a creature of pure will without interest in, much less obedience to, *all those rules we*

systemic restrictions of nineteenth-century Victorian society (95). Dare consciously decides to commit both the murders and the merciless mutilations in East End precisely because it is a location where all manner of criminal activity takes place. Adverse atmospheric conditions that construe the nocturnal city as inhospitable aid illicit acts while simultaneously sheltering them (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 22). Therefore, the function of an already-corrupted setting is to further conceal or camouflage the destructive discharge of sadism. As a strolling spectator, Dare deciphers the ciphering space, acquiring topographical connoisseurship of the city and, afterward, transforming its proximal foreignness into place. The figure of the stalker soon supersedes the passively perceptive flâneur, his sharp-eyed and premeditated movements obsessively focused on finding the perfect place for perpetrating atrocities. For example, Dare explains,

> I must plan carefully. I must choose the spot, not the woman, henceforth, based on the patrol patterns of the constables, thereby decreasing the chance of discovery *in flagrante*. I must examine the spot for escape routes so that I would not hesitate in disarray if noted but could vanish abruptly. I also must locate less well-traveled areas of Whitechapel than the one I had so foolishly chosen, that close to a main thoroughfare lit brightly by gas illumination and the glare of grog houses and constables' lanterns. (53)

It is thus safe to say that the stalker's camouflaged prowling through the city transforms the once-innocent stroller into a threatening predator. Finally, the first conscious consummation of the city's commodities *par excellence*, the prostitutes, via murder and mutilation, marks Dare's metamorphosis into a serial murderer. It can be said that Dare's three degrees of existence emphasize a clear connection to the space-place of the city that the professor transforms outside-in, familiarizing the fatally unfamiliar. Namely, the less-than-fortunate inhabitants identify it as an almost autonomous entity, an all-devouring agent of destruction continuously diffusing its corruptive influence. Following the theoretical articulations of flânerie, the professor positively fuses with East End's topography. Contrary to the low-class citizens who are constrained to only one section of the city, it can be argued

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agreed upon when we put ourselves under roof. Mercy? Pity? Cooperation? Civility? Brotherhood? The hallowed temple of the soul? Bah, he pushed them aside with a single brutish swipe" (65; emphasis added).

that the professor's subject-position is privileged. Despite Dare's existence as a serial murderer, he can experience a sense of place anywhere. After all, Tuan states that the city is a specific environment in that it is created exclusively by and for humans and, as such, it equally welcomes both criminals and members of the bourgeoisie ("Place: An Experiential Perspective" 157). Nonetheless, the subchapter contends that the connection between Dare and the city transcends the idea of merely mastering its labyrinth-like topography. In the aforementioned article, Lukić and Parezanović state that the spaces that once shaped the "stroller's experience are now subverted" by the serial killer's "aggressive drives acted out through the five murders" (6). Still, the subchapter's stance is that the aggressive drives are not enacted through the murders only but through the four merciless mutilations.[26] Therefore, the chapter's central argument, inspired by the two authors' implication, is that the professor, while perpetuating atrocious acts of mutilation, inscribes the topography of East End with the marker of moral monstrosity. Precisely, the professor transforms or translates East End's streets to loci of absolute abjection. If, according to both phenomenology's and human geography's premise that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, then the marker of monstrosity cannot be a particular place's a *priori* property. Drawing inspiration from both of these assessments, the city's atmospheric and architectural conditions, shrouded in phantasmagorical shadows, allow for the articulation of moral monstrosity that, in turn, contribute to construing that same city as monstrous. In this regard, the relationship between the city and the troubling figure of transgression is cyclical. The disturbingly deceptive city provides an exemplary site for the enactment of monstrosity, its atmospheric conditions, apparent architectural irrationality, inhumane dwelling, and living conditions, and the all-alarming crowd enhance its effect. The city is neither overtly chaotic nor non-chaotic – it is its liminal existence as a "there" that is never totalizable as a "there" (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 28) that enables said enactment. As such, it is also available for attack and infection (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 18) by the figure of the serial murderer who imprints its streets with the marker of monstrosity.

[26] The cause of death of Dare's third victim, Elizabeth Stride, was a single clear-cut incision, measuring six inches across her neck. Dare did not further mutilate Stride's body because he was interrupted during the attack by a German immigrant.

2.2. Richard Warlow's *Ripper Street* (2012-2016)

The subchapter will start by providing the basic premise behind Richard Warlow's television series *Ripper Street*. The chapter then attempts to analyze whether Warlow uses common late-nineteenth-century tropes to portray the East End as an exclusively dangerous and disorderly neighborhood by examining the first scene of the series, the decision to portray various police departments as inefficient and often powerless, and the binary between the West and East End. The aim of the chapter, however, is to show that Warlow does not depict the East End as a blighted, neglected neighborhood. To accomplish this, he does not portray Jack the Ripper as a major component of late-nineteenth-century iconography, he often shows the East End during the day, which undermines the notion that it is only a space for criminal, nocturnal activity, and he depicts the lives of ordinary citizens who are traditionally portrayed as "surplus." As will be elaborated, these elements emphasize East End's concurrent coexistence as a space of anxiety and a safe place, an asylum sheltering its inhabitants from the condemning West End gaze. Specifically, the first section will mainly draw on Julian Wolfreys's seminal study on *fin de siècle*'s London. The subchapter will then argue that similarly to the doubly articulated East End, Detective Inspector Edmund Reid exists as a threshold type. Following in the footsteps of Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, and Tom McDonough, Reid will be defined as a flâneur-detective whose cryptic connection to the crime is observable in his oscillation between asserting order and abusing it. Although the corruption that takes its hold with the attempted murder of Jedediah Shine and the murder of Horace Buckley implies Reid's moral monstrosity, the subchapter will argue that the city's double articulation demands two types of behaviors that teeter between being law-abiding and transgressive. The subchapter will then focus on two transgressive figures from the first series, Arthur Donaldson and Claxton, defining them as moral monsters according to Michel Foucault's postulation, and, afterward, applying Havi Carel's reformulation of Freud's death drives in defining their demeanor as sadism: the destruction aimed at another for the purpose of pleasure. In line with Marko Lukić and Tijana Parezanović's statement that the serial killer's drives subvert spaces (6), and phenomenology's and human geography's premise that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, the subchapter will attempt to argue that the relationship among East End and the myriad articulation of monstrosity is cyclical. Although East End exists as a safe place to its surplus inhabitants, its second articulation asserts it as an always already corrupted setting that camouflages the destructive discharge of

sadism. In the end, it will examine whether the reenactment of transgressions in a transgressions-prone setting reinscribes it as precisely such.

The first season of Richard Warlow's television series *Ripper Street* (2012-2016) is set in April 1889. Despite the Ripper's absence, Whitechapel's H Division detectives are still patrolling the streets and alleys of Whitechapel where the murders and subsequent mutilations of Mary Anne Nichols and Annie Chapman happened because they fear the Ripper's return. Contrary to the previously analyzed case study, the Ripper's identity has not been revealed. Therefore, the three protagonists of the series, Detective Inspector Edmund Reid, Detective Sergeant Bennett Drake, and the former U.S. Army surgeon and Pinkerton Captain Homer Jackson, work together to discover whether the current murder was authored by the still-anonymous Ripper. Since the woman's body was carved, the trio concludes that the corpse invokes Ripper's methods of murder and bodily mutilation. However, they soon discover that they are dealing with separate criminals who are concealing their monstrous behavior behind the notorious "Ripper" name. Still, instead of indefinitely obsessing over the myth, the series presents a myriad of multifaceted, complex characters whose criminal actions are driven by distinct motivations – be it aggressive-acting out to acquire pleasure, underprivileged working and living conditions, or concurrent disgust toward and dread of the immigrant. Accordingly, Warlow's acclaimed series is not so much about the "Ripper" as it is about East End's streets and the people populating them.[27]

The opening scenes of the series introduce the cacophonous city in *medias res* – both East End's deteriorating buildings and well-worn streets are immersed in darkness, infrequently illuminated by the faintly glaring gas lights that flicker in the suffocating London smog. In such scenes, empirical observation remains obsolete, and the city reveals itself as utterly unknowable and adverse to distinct forms of familiarization and, accordingly, domestication because, as Wolfreys writes, these atmospheric conditions aim at provoking phantasmagoric sensations among its population (*Inventions of the City* 38).[28] Still, in spite of

[27] Since the series spans over five seasons or, more precisely, thirty-seven episodes in total, the subchapter will concentrate on the episodes considered most relevant to the concepts under discussion.

[28] For example, in *Writing London: The Trace of the Urban Text from Blake to Dickens* (1998), Wolfreys writes that "London is a city with monstrous, sublime and seemingly infinite – and therefore

its spatial incongruities, the streets are teeming with poverty-stricken petty thieves and pickpockets, street-dwellers and vomiting drunkards, low-class prostitutes, and upper-class citizens who wish to witness Whitechapel in all its goriness, taking guided tours to the streets that testify to the worst of human nature. Adding to the current cacophony is the imbibed crowd's chuckle, the prostitutes' incentives to indulge in intercourse, and the thud of horse traffic, superseded by the guide's enthusiastic exclamations. Tuan contends that such cacophony may be one of the most confusing and daunting experiences as noise is a specific type of chaos that influences individuals and their emotions on a fundamental level (*Landscapes of Fear* 147). Arguably, both the atmospheric conditions and this auditory chaos rule out rational perception, producing a phobic sensation among its unaccustomed, middle and upper-class visitors. Following the guided tour through dark passageways populated with Whitechapel's destitute, we witness an archetypal portrayal of the East End. Its passageways are depicted as dark and dampened, submerged in sexual squeals, and permeated by the pungent odor of horse ordure, cheap gin, and dead flowers. In one such street, the tour even encounters a woman's butchered body that immediately invokes the force of the figure of the Ripper. Anticipating that which should not have been witnessed, to paraphrase Wolfreys, the curtain descends on Warlow's city (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 25). At this moment, the end-of-century tropes are staged on the city that, in turn, becomes staged by them asserting, as Wolfreys writes, that they are always already there (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 25; 27). In this regard, the tropes reproduce the well-established iconography of an abject East End, reinscribing it, as Helena Esser writes, into the collective imaginary ("What Use Our Work? Crime and Justice in *Ripper Street*" 142).

Throughout the series, East End is illustrated as "a lawless shit swarm" ("I Need Light"), "a stinking shitpit," "a foul warren" ("Tournament of Shadows"), "the arsehole of the world where one's sins are shat" ("Dynamite and a Woman"), "a cursed place" ("Heavy Boots"), "the merciless bitch of the East" ("Some Conscience Lost"), "a reeking purgatory" ("The Dreaming Dead"), to name just a few. This adjectival coloring arguably emphasizes the existence of fin de siècle tropes that portray the city as threatening – a disorderly district devoid of legal regulation and police practice. The absence of such practices enables the

unknowable – proportions" (105). Therefore, it is safe to say that the city's unknowability causes the feeling of all-pervading foreignness that, in turn, provokes anxiety among its inhabitants.

criminal classes to spawn freely, like bacteria. After all, Drake says that there have been criminals on the streets as long as there has been horse muck on them ("In My Protection"). These criminals have spread their corruptive influence wide and deep across the parishes of East London. In "Troubled by Violence: Transnational Complexity and the Critique of Masculinity in *Ripper Street*" (2014), Elke Weissmann argues that the presence of the police, that is, the bobby, in the television series functions to subvert the idea that the end-of-century city epitomized a period during which everything was perceivable within the black versus white binary (282). Instead of invoking inaccurate sentiments of police superiority ingrained in British popular imagination, *Ripper Street*'s policemen are portrayed as inadequate, battling forces beyond their immediate power (Ibid.). For example, in "A Man of My Company," H Division's young constable Hobbs confronts Frank Goodnight, a former Pinkerton detective hired by the shipping magnate Theodore Swift to asphyxiate the wife of the recently assassinated Argentinian shipping company's chief engineer. Hobbs is powerless against the Pinkerton agent who knocks him over, severs his spinal cord, and throws him into the Thames. In "In My Protection," the much more experienced H Division's detectives are also defenseless against the self-proclaimed "Vigilante Committee," a crowd of concerned citizens supervising the streets of Whitechapel to restore order by all means necessary. Moreover, the series repeatedly emphasizes that the investigative methods of the second half of the nineteenth century, such as collecting clues and statements on the streets of East End or merely relying on Dr. Drake's autopsy reports or poor-quality photographs to supplement physical descriptions, are insufficient to apprehend criminals. Therefore, unable to use incontrovertible evidence to enforce justice, H Division detectives often resort to violence themselves.

In addition to the opening scene's setting that re-inscribes the idea of an abject East End, and the portrayal of the police as ineffectual, *Ripper Street* also asserts an apparent antithesis among its West and East End. The series furthers the city's spatial segregation by representing scenes of the river Thames that visually separate the two tributaries of nineteenth-century society. Specifically, these scenes provide a street-level panorama of ingrained spatial inequalities; while its West section symbolizes accomplishment and affluence, its East section represents the residency of the abject that the upper-class citizens abhor. Such segregation is best discernible in scenes during which Whitechapel's Edmund Reid walks the Eastern Docklands that stand in stark contrast to the Western ones. While the

Eastern Docklands are depicted as dirty and suffocating in all-engulfing smog, its banks brimming with sewage sludge, ejecting both human bodies and animal extremities, the West Docklands are almost always depicted during daylight, its skies infused with wood-fireplace fumes. The former ones are also a setting for committing criminal acts of all sorts, such as murder, grand-scale cargo theft, and the less obvious robbery of the ordinary Jonny English to whom the low-cost imported spices, silks, fruits, and vegetables are sold at a ridiculously high price. Of course, the Western Docklands are only ever established as their virtuous opposition. The West versus East binary is asserted as the constituting element of the city's identity implying, in turn, a paradigmatically stereotypical portrayal of nineteenth-century London. Such a portrayal, as Wolfreys writes, sees "nothing in seeing the same everywhere, and seeing everywhere in the city as the same" (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 27). It remains haunted by its previous portrayals, reduced to passive reiteration through the usage of archetypal tropes that hide its multiformity. After all, as Esser explains, the title of the series clearly conjures a specific setting – a nineteenth-century Victorian city haunted by the Ripper's monstrous acts to the extent that all additional adjectival coloration remains redundant (148). Such a setting already hints at the existence of morally corrupt characters who are lurking from the unfathomable depths of darkest London.

Throughout the series, the morally corrupt character *par excellence* is acutely present although positively absent. As one of East End's inhabitants, Mr. Lavender, explains: "Yes, that night… I saw him. But I saw nothing in him! Where his face should be… only darkness! It's the Ripper. He is dybbuk" ("What Use Our Work" 00:09:51-00:10:13). The tension between the Ripper's half-glimpsed presence and absence is emphasized by Mr. Lavender's use of the Hebrew word "dybbuk," which, in Jewish folklore, symbolizes a disembodied spirit that wanders restlessly until it finds haven in the body of another human. Upon finding the unknown woman's body in an East End alley in episode one, the H Division trio concludes that it bears all the markings of previous murders, such as star-crossed shapes carved across the eyes and her carotid being cut from left to right. In the first episode, the Ripper is referred to by using negatively loaded words such as: "Is it *him*?" "Has *he* come?" "*That* man," "lunatic," "*our* friend," "*this* maniac" ("I Need Light;" emphasis added). Thus, the indistinct implication of the Ripper's return that, as an eerie echo, reverberates through the collective imagination of nineteenth-century Londoners, adds to the all-absorbing sensation of anxiety. Initially, it seems as if the series aims at creating yet another articulation of the city that

reconstructs and recreates archetypal end-of-century tropes. However, while all of the aspects previously discussed were common conditions of the nineteenth-century city, Wolfreys writes that there was a hidden facet of London, often obscured by the general focus on its binary extremes and exoticism, central to the analysis of the city at the end of the century (*Inventions of the City* 94). As noted in the chapter's introduction, this hidden facet is often overlooked in dominant depictions of the East End. It can be argued that living in London was not so nightmarish for its middle and upper-class citizens. Thus, in spite of the series' initial setting, the portrayal of the police as ineffective, and the discussed duality between the West and East End, this subchapter will argue that *Ripper Street* partially reinvents and reconstructs the end-of-century city, offering an articulation that goes beyond the archetypal representations of the late nineteenth century. Rather than portraying the East End as a neglected neighborhood populated exclusively by criminals, the subchapter will underline that Warlow offers a more "realistic" representation. After all, Reid repeatedly asserts that East End *is* life, in all its savage and rotten splendor. After returning from his self-imposed seaside exile in Hampton with his daughter Mathilda, Reid explains that the reason for his return was because Whitechapel is his home: "You have seen Hampton, the promenade, the Paris halls, the polite conversations amid the teacups. There is nothing of it that breathes. There is nothing of it that is alive, and quick, and stinking, and bright. Whitechapel is life . . . Besides it, the rest of the world seems a tomb," to which Drake responds: "It is rotten and wild. It is heaving and pitiless, and ignorant. And I have yet seen nowhere to match it. - It is *our* heartland, Bennet Drake" ("Some Conscience Lost" 00:36:59-00:37:44; emphasis added).

Firstly, the series forgoes the Ripper myth as a constituent element in the construction of *fin de siècle* London. At the end of the first episode, Reid, Drake, and Jackson reveal that the aforementioned murdered woman was not a "street-walker" but a middle-class violinist who, having stumbled upon hard times, set to participate in early pornographic photography, eventually ending up a casualty of one of the nineteenth century's first snuff films directed by Sir Arthur Donaldson. When Donaldson is revealed as a copycat who, after asphyxiating Maude Thwaites, masked her murder to resemble that of the Ripper, Reid states that he will not be preyed upon by the prospect of the Ripper's return. The detective's direct order that "[they] cease to look for him in every act of evil that crosses [their] path. There is an abundance of that hereabout" ("I Need Light" 00:56:31-00:56:39), marks the transitional moment of the series that shifts its focus from the serial killer to the streets themselves

anticipating, as Esser explains, that their criminal corruption is not attributable to an atavistic "evil" stalking from somewhere in the shadows (165). Warlow's depiction disentangles East End from the Ripper myth, overturning our expectations that rely on representing one-way gendered violence that, as Weissmann argues, archetypally asserts women as hapless victims and men as their violence-prone perpetrators and/or heroes (275).

Secondly, after the opening scene that mirrors a stereotypical Neo-Victorian setting, the spectators are introduced to Leman Street during broad daylight. The scene is particularly important as it presupposes a side to the East End that transcends the pre-constructed imagery that is almost always presented prior to introducing the intricacies of the story. Esser thus observes that Leman Street is brimming with street vendors selling sewing materials, multicolored fabrics, and household items, alongside bakers, butchers, flower-girls, and shoe-shiners (150). To paraphrase Esser's observations, the ordinary shopper mingles with coachmen, coal-whippers, dock laborers, flower-girls, lumberers, trotter-scrapers, tradesmen, police officers, prostitutes, sailors, seamstresses, soldiers, immigrants of Arabian, Asian, Indian, Jewish, and Slavic descent, and women who are not immediately introduced as "tarts," as was the preferred *mot du jour*, but belong to the middle or upper class (Ibid.). Both these women and high-class prostitutes that populate the streets during the daytime are dressed in flashy fabrics. The buildings, far from being indistinguishable brick boxes, are colored in shades of blue, green, red, and yellow. The cobbled streets are not covered with mud and animal manure. They do not turn into rivulets of muck after each passing shower. Moreover, multicolored shop facades, pub signs, street vendors' tents, and their products all add to the vibrancy of Whitechapel (Ibid.). Therefore, contrary to the previously considered case study, the poverty-stricken, such as street urchins, the homeless, drunkards, and low-class prostitutes, do not make up the majority of Whitechapel's population – as Esser explains, they are outnumbered by "ordinary citizens" who are shown as buying groceries and household items, working, or simply walking the streets (151). Still, it is important to investigate the portrayal of "the lowest of the low" to argue that the series asserts East End's alternative articulation, somewhat distancing itself from merely duplicating *fin de siècle* tropes.

According to Wolfreys's argument, East End's labyrinth-like districts provoke the disorienting condition that dismantles individuals' identities, ejecting as it were waste the energies of those it has engulfed, and, afterward, spurned as surpluses (*Inventions of the City*

18). The preeminent surplus person is the prostitute, whom Detective Drake describes as the city's hapless casualty. He specifies East End's streets as sites of sexual consumption and subsequent moral corruption: "From the orphan house to the workhouse to the whorehouse. Whitechapel will swallow her whole" ("The Beating of Her Wings" 00:48:56-00:49:01). The processes of swallowing and, according to Wolfreys, spitting out do not point toward the presence of an anthropomorphized agency that construes East End as a cognizant, all-consuming monster. Specifically, these prostitutes are abused by a long line of wealthy men and, according to Detective Drake, it is the Empire that enables such colossal cruelty. Therefore, the insights into the lives of East End's poorest inhabitants emphasize that their poverty is a by-product of the city and, to a larger extent, of the Empire that is apathetic to their existence. This is best evident in the episode "The Weight of One Man's Heart," which features the former Colonel Madoc Faulkner, who fought with Detective Drake in the Mahdist War in Sudan. Faulkner returns to the Empire to redress the wrongful treatment of its veterans. After strolling through and investigating East End's most impoverished areas that are inhabited by former soldiers sleeping on straw and scarcely surviving on scraps, Faulkner says: "Thus our glorious Britannia, Sergeant. She takes a man and hollows him. Spits him back with the marrow still dripping from her maw" ("The Weight of One Man's Heart" 00:15:01-00:15:09). Analogously to Drake's, Faulkner's description assumes the city's anthropomorphic characteristics, cannily devouring and, afterward, violently spitting out the soldiers' remains. However, the city is not a nightmarish agent of abjection, although Faulkner asserts it as the very antithesis of the civilized world. The conditions of living in London's poorest areas provoke an impersonal and inhuman discomfort, incompatible with the lives of the inhabitants who are condemned to either becoming criminals or being destroyed by it. Put differently, the inhabitants who are dehumanized to a state of poverty will react, *in extremis*, in a most extreme manner.

That the behavior of East End's inhabitants is a by-product of the environment is further exemplified by Deborah Goren, who works as a mistress of the Jewish orphanage in Whitechapel: "They are mirrors… as evil, or as innocent as the world that gives life to them. And this world . . . This world is a wicked one" ("In My Protection" 00:45:44-00:45:56). The lowest-of-the-low living in the slums die four times faster than those living in the rest of the city. To avoid being killed by the city's conditions, they often turn to criminality. Thus, these threats are not produced by the city *per se*, but nevertheless belong to it. This is best

discernable in detective Reid's argument that the inhabitants of Whitechapel are not inherently vicious, idle, or violent but behave as such because they are left with no choice ("Some Conscience Lost"). Yet, Colonel Faulkner fulfills the two predictions; after a series of masterminded robberies with his war veterans, he shoots himself in the head.

Moreover, the series microscopically mirrors the Empire's anxiety of the Other, prevalent in end-of-the-century portrayals of the city. In addition to the Arabs, who are continuously threatened to be hung from the gaslights of High Road, the Chinese, variously called "chinks," "celestials," and "murdering pajama fighters" ("Pure as the Driven"), the Irish, introduced as impulsive "scum," primitive Paddies devoted to drinking and displaying violence ("Dynamite and a Woman"),[29] and the Indians, variously called "coolies," "googoos," "lascars," "rice-eaters," and "murdering moon-faced bastards" ("The Stranger's Home Part 2"), the series devotes ample attention to depicting the perpetual dread provoked by the presence of the Jews, repeatedly referred to as "Christ-killers," "kikes," and "scum" ("Threads of Silk and Gold"). Compared to the well-situated members of the middle and upper classes, these immigrants seem strange and, at the same time, antagonistic; their customs and foreign languages appear and sound primitive to the host population. According to Wolfreys's argument, the Other, localized as the East End Londoner, provokes anxiety because he has the power of incursion into individual and collective identity (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 41). Since the immigrant stands out from the host populace by his

[29] In an episode that explores the late nineteenth-century English/Irish relations, Member of Parliament Cecil Knightley says: "Trust an Irishman? I would sooner play chess with an Orang-utan . . . the Irishman is a Negro turned inside out. Given only to slavishness and violence. The Irishman harps on freedom. Freedom to do what, exactly? Shoot landowners, thieve livestock, explode dynamite . . . The Irishman was put on this earth to be ruled, and it is up to us, gentlemen, to rule him" ("Dynamite and a Woman" 00:10:40-00:11:39). While an in-depth dissection of the English/Irish relations remains outside of the scope of the dissertation, it is important to stress that the series stays true to the nineteenth-century perception and portrayal of Irish immigrants. Knightley's comment on their tendency toward crime complies with Roger Swift's 1987 study, "The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City," according to which the districts inhabited by the Irish were commonly seen by the "host" community as "hotbeds of crime" and their inhabitants as contributing to the crime rate in the categories of petty theft, public drunkenness, and disorderly demeanor (268). By asserting the Irish as less-than-humans (i.e., orangutans), Knightley also underlines the urgency for their subjugation that adheres to Swift's study according to which the Victorian Intelligentsia saw the Irish as inferior in culture and as alien in race to the Anglo-Saxons (271).

nationality, race, religion, and poverty, they endanger Britain's national identity, its well-established values, its crumbling economy, and point toward a tarnishing of its citizens through Oriental commodities such as opium. Still, the series repeatedly reasserts that the immigrants are innocent casualties of the Empire's politics. In "Pure as the Driven," Detective Drake wonders why the immigrants will not return to their respective countries, while Reid replies: "They can't. They are worked and abandoned. No promise of return, no knowledge of how to survive here. It is a purgatory, which grows by increment. Lost men gather here and find what they can. Whilst others profit" (00:21:04-00:21:18). In this regard, Reid's statement summarizes the treatment of immigrants throughout the series; after fleeing from their poverty-stricken provinces seeking shelter and prosperity, these "aliens" are bled dry, be it working for the upper-class employers or fighting the Empire's wars, and abandoned to, literally and metaphorically, roam the streets of East End. Thus, in "Men of Iron, Men of Smoke," Reid is dissatisfied with his daughter's fascination with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, avidly arguing that Londoners should abandon the perception that all immigrants are inherently dangerous individuals who only want to exploit women.

Therefore, the subchapter's stance is that the portrayal of immigrants is intrinsically interrelated to the portrayal of the city itself. Precisely, the end-of-century topographical constructions of the city, as Wolfreys writes, either marginalize or erase the everyday realities of poverty, working-class, and immigrant experience (*Materiality, Memory, and Spectrality* 40). However, since the series asserts a double articulation of the East End, it does not simply depict the abundance of identities that populate it as inherently abject. For example, the episode "Threads of Silk and Gold" focuses on a fraction of messenger boys moonlighting as male prostitutes. At first, the fraction is utterly frowned upon, with the Whitechapel detectives declaring that they are "abominable buggers," "arse-mongers," "hugger-muggers," "pansies," "perverts," "Polly prick-ticklers," "sodomites," and "Uranians."[30] After the unsuccessful

[30] The second season of *Ripper Street* is set in 1890. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Victorians held homosexuality in horror, vehemently vilifying the men who violated the precepts of "proper" masculinity. The usual punishment for homosexuality was death sentence in the armed forces, which was replaced with life imprisonment only in 1861 (Adut 215). Great Britain was the only country in Western Europe that persecuted and penalized consensual homosexual acts with cruel penalties. Still, homosexuality laws were reluctantly enforced, even when their transgressors were well known. In his article, "A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde" (2005), Ari Adut argues that the authorities were

blackmail of an upper-class banker that culminates with his supposed suicide, one of the two boys under investigation is murdered. Eventually, Detective Reid reveals that the boys were in a romantic relationship, blackmailing the banker to earn enough money to escape to a country that does not persecute homosexuals. As a detective, Reid is ardent to adhering to the letter of the law, no matter the consequences. However, by the end of the episode, Reid realizes that homosexuals are hapless victims of hidebound Victorian morality. Aside from presenting various sexual orientations, *Ripper Street* also discusses a wide variety of predominant political problems – The Irish Home Rule that aspired to assert internal autonomy for Ireland, the role of India under British rule, the ever-expanding opium trafficking and its corruptive influence on nineteenth-century citizens, the absence of workers' rights, juvenile delinquency, and the all-present poverty. As Esser explains, the individuals imagined as surplus and the victims of the prevailing nineteenth-century problems do not remain on the series' sidelines, functioning as simple décor that adds "flavor to the scenery with a mixture of apathy and voyeurism" (147) – rather than using them as mere ornaments that never distract from the main narrative, Warlow repeatedly places them in the foreground of the series.

Moreover, Esser stresses that the series is not only staged on East End's streets but in its "homes, hospitals, orphanages, prisons, shops, pubs, brothels, music halls, dock sites, churches, and offices" (152). In other words, it suggests the presence of places that shelter the inhabitants from the scornful West End gaze and that, as Esser argues, serve as their home,

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hesitant to persecute high-profile personas. Specifically, the sanctioning of the most egregious of all sexual sins would entail its publicity, creating a scandal, "debasing the public sphere, and [defiling] its participants, the members of middle and upper classes" (222-223). Since reticence was "the paramount principle of the nineteenth-century public sphere," homosexual acts committed in private were unsanctioned even when they were common knowledge (241). Such a stance toward privately conducted acts of "gross indecency" is also apparent in *Ripper Street* – Detective Reid is devoted to revealing the reasons behind the murder of the investment consultant for one of London's bigger banks, Solomon Quint, and not to the persecution of high-profile homosexuals. As it is later revealed, the real reason behind Quint's murder was that he wanted to inform the general public that Argentina has run out of gold and is about to go bankrupt, making their investments there null and void.

however voluntarily or involuntarily (Ibid.). Specifically, East End is not stigmatized as a space that solely shelters monstrous, unruly, or violent individuals but is depicted as consisting of a diverse community that, as Esser explains, deserves detailed "examination based on its vivacity and complexity" (146). According to Tuan's argument that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, a particular sense of place does not derive from a number of its extraneous architectural aspects. It is a perception of a place held by its inhabitants, and, as such, it can signify something different to two persons given the context of their respective subject positions. In regard to the city, Tuan states that it is an environment created for its citizens and, as such, it equally tolerates both its criminally corrupted ones, such as thieves, and its cultured ones ("Place: An Experiential Perspective" 157). Thus, the city can symbolize the crucible of civilization and a sordid spectacle, a site of sin. Analogously to Tuan, Wolfreys also writes that the end-of-century city passageways protected both criminals and the cultured (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 170). Such a dichotomy is discernible in the series' depiction of East End districts that simultaneously signify spaces of anxiety and safe places. For some, East End shapes a sensation of aesthetic distaste, anxiety, and apprehension. Such sensations are intensified by the influx of criminals and by the less-than-citizens living in the slums who threaten to both morally and physically contaminate the well-to-do. For others, East End functions as a shelter of surplus inhabitants, such as immigrants, prostitutes, and veterans, as well as "prohibited" practices, such as prostitution and transvestism, conducted by the less-than-fortunate and frequently consumed by the middle and upper classes. To paraphrase Wolfreys, East End's "khoralike function" facilitates its complementary coexistence as an unknowable, unfamiliar space and a place that is shaped by the individuals inhabiting it (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 40).

As a place of nefarious pleasures and disreputable delights, East End also entices the bourgeoisie to escape exact Victorian values and satisfy their illicit inclinations. For example, in the episode "The Incontrovertible Truth," the H Division detectives investigate the murder of an anonymous Whitechapel woman whose bare body is found lying beside the unconscious Lady Vera Montacute, who is afterward brought in and arrested on suspicion of murder. Eventually, the detectives discover that Lady Montacute employed the woman to act as her body-double, drugging her with a mixture of morphine and cocaine to cause a surging sense of euphoria that would encourage her to engage in intercourse with the Montacutes. Suffering a drug-induced state, Lord Montacute murders the woman. Although Lady Montacute is a

member of the aristocracy, she suffers from the all-engulfing sensation of ennui. After being arrested, Lady Montacute answers: "You asked me why it is I come here to these streets, where you find your daily struggles with its dirt and its deaths and its chaos. Everything that you would see rid from this world, Mr. Reid, I glorify" ("The Incontrovertible Truth" 01:02:14-01:02:37). To her, East End's streets stimulate a foreign fascination, alternating between being both abject and appealing. East End thus becomes the favored site for a brand-new breed of "slum tourists"[31] who visit London's impoverished areas to satiate their salacious needs. This does not mean that all visitors want to satisfy the thrill of their criminal corruption. Not unlike in Hunter's *I, Ripper*, some come to see the "wonders" that are not available in the proper places of the West End. For example, in "Become Man," visitors are fascinated by East End's "freak" troupe that features a bearded woman, a contortionist, a man who is being branded with iron because he is impervious to pain, and a woman with a tail who is displayed in a glass-cabinet. Some also come to visit the cabaret café that stages singing and acting performances by former prostitutes. In such instances, the issue of spatial segregation is overcome as the East End becomes inhabited by both criminals and cultured alike.

Comfortably fluctuating between the two articulations of the city is *Ripper Street*'s Detective Inspector, Edmund Reid. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin argues that one of the first incarnations of the flâneur is found in the figure of the drifter-turned-detective, as present in Poe's short story "The Man of the Crowd" (1840). "The flâneur," Benjamin writes, "required a social legitimation of his habitus" (*The Arcades Project* 442), exposing that an

[31] Slums were one of the spatial "results" of the enormous population growth that took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Andrzej Diniejko argues, "London's population expanded to four million, which spurred a high demand for cheap housing. London slums arose initially as a result of rapid population growth and industrialization" ("Slums and Slumming"). As a result, many families were crammed into single-room dwellings, which led to overcrowding, unsanitary and filthy living conditions (Ibid.). Later, both isolated incidents and large-scale criminal cases were seen as symptomatic of life in the slums, which were considered the scene of obscenities such as bestiality, drunkenness, and fornication. As Diniejko explains, the East End, often referred to as "darkest London," became a popular destination for slumming toward the end of the nineteenth century, a new phenomenon that attracted middle- and upper-class citizens driven by curiosity (Ibid.). Slumming even evolved into a form of "illicit tourism" (Ibid.). Diniejko states that "upper-class slummers sometimes spent in disguise a night or more in poor boarding houses seeking to experience taboo intimacies with the members of the lower classes" (Ibid.), thus satisfying needs that were considered nefarious by strict Victorian norms.

acceptable way to validate the idle, ineffective walks was to evaluate all of the accumulated experiences as part of a painstaking investigation of a self-proclaimed detective, giving purpose to the otherwise purposeless pleasure of passive observation. The detective's activities are similar to that of the flâneur because they are both focused on figuring out people's personalities from their appearance, yet their aims differ since the detective's aim presupposes a premeditated plan. Reid is a flâneur insofar as he aimlessly ambles about East End's streets and its Docklands, absorbing different images, individual actions, interpersonal interactions, and the city's spatial characteristics. These flâneurian practices facilitate Reid's topographical connoisseurship of the city, apparent in his oft-repeated assertion, "These are *my* streets" ("Tournament of Shadows" 00:24:27-00:24:28; emphasis added). The end-of-century city is construed as immeasurable, a terrifyingly foreign terrain that nobody can call home. As a flâneur, Reid is dedicated to deciphering the ciphering cityscape, displaying a tendency to familiarize the otherwise unfamiliar. His peripatetic practices, combined with careful observation and watchfulness, become the main mechanisms of outlining and mastering the city. Still, as soon as Reid starts giving systemic attention to the city's conditions and its inhabitants, the once-passive practices, as Benjamin writes, become the predetermined activities of the detective (*The Arcades Project* 442). Reid becomes the active and conscious "reader" of the cityscape, attentive to its inhabitants' appearances, their personal actions, and interpersonal interactions. As soon as he starts scrutinizing the dark side of East End, Reid "pull[s] aside the cloak of the crowd to reveal the asocial criminal hiding at its very heart" (McDonough 105). That is, his investigative gaze penetrates even the most hidden persons and their motives.

Further complicating Reid's formulation as a flâneur-detective is his decision to resort to all sorts of criminal offenses. Equipped with the power of rationality and logic, the detective could be counted on to bring back order to the spaces overwhelmed with criminality and chaos. However, the series stresses that the flâneur-detective who decodes mysteries and employs incontrovertible evidence to root out deviance throughout the East End often has an ambivalent attitude toward crime. Focusing on the flâneur's cryptic connection to crime, Benjamin wrote, "No matter what traces the flâneur may follow, every one of them will lead him to a crime" (*The Writer of Modern Life* 72). According to McDonough's analysis of Benjamin's argument, the ambivalence of such a statement provides two possible readings. The flâneur's connection to crime positively complies with the primary purpose of the

detective, pinpointing transgressions perpetrated in the urban metropolis, uncovering the truth of its streets, and, finally, the criminal hiding at its heart (105). As a true connoisseur of its topography, the figure of the flâneur-detective can reinstate communal order and relieve the fear of the crowd. Throughout *Ripper Street*, Reid successfully deals with disorder – catching Arthur Donaldson, who was a pioneer of early pornographic photography and also a producer and performer in one of the first Victorian "snuff" films featuring asphyxiated prostitutes; Carmichael, the commander of a cruel children's organization, who operated as assassins; Claxton, the superintendent of a Whitechapel bakery who wanted to mass murder its population via selling poison-contaminated bread, and Sir Victor Silver who, with the help of his sister, abducted women and shipped them to South America as sex slaves, to name but a few.

Nonetheless, Reid's absolute and often obsessive immersion into the object of his observation is considered suspicious since the ardent analysis of appearances aligns with the assignment of detectives as well as criminals. Such an ambiguity affected McDonough's alternative analysis according to which the flâneur-as-detective can convert into a criminal *par excellence*, "his wanderings through the city streets as themselves perhaps criminal acts, inevitably leading him into crime" (101). Reid's watchfulness, vigilance, and the capacity to catch things in flight are underlined with a feeling of uncertainty. As Benjamin argues, the transformation from the "philosophical promenader" to the perceptive pursuer points toward the presence of predatory traits of a "werewolf" (*The Arcades Project* 418). These animalistic attributes are evident in episode three of season four in which Mathilda, Reid's daughter, draws a parallel between the predator *par excellence*, the fictional Count Dracula, and the detective in that they both decided to devise a lair in Whitechapel ("Some Conscience Lost"). The word "lair" signifies a place where wild animals live, furthering Reid's formulation as an ambiguous, animal-like figure that transforms from being an instrument of inspection, initially committed to contemplating and converting the ambiguity of the crowd, into its disturbance. In this regard, Reid's spatial routines are subtended by *other*-oriented practices, such as the unauthorized use of police force, transgressions done in public spaces, as well as those done against one's private property.

Aside from beating suspects, fighting in public places and privately-owned pubs, saloons, shops, music halls, and breaking into individuals' homes and offices, Reid admits

that the H Division detectives utilized illegal instruments in their attempt to apprehend the Ripper ("I Need Light"). Drawing from the theoretical formulations of flânerie, Detective Reid represents a threshold type. Such liminality is not signified by his simultaneous belonging and non-belonging to a particular place since Reid perceives East End as his "home" and "heartland" ("No Wolves in Whitechapel"), but by his oscillation between asserting order and abusing it. Specifically, Weissmann writes that Reid is shown not just to make mistakes, but to be prone to repeating them, something that is deeply discernible in his affairs with women (281). Throughout the first three seasons, Reid is engaged in three extramarital relationships – with the Jewish orphanage mistress Deborah Goren, with the councilwoman Jane Cobden, and with the upper-class Elenora Freeman after his temporary retreat to Hampton-on-Sea. The relationships are far from reciprocal, with the three women attempting to provoke passion from the emotionally distanced detective. In comparison to the constantly intoxicated Captain Jackson, whose transgressions are often dismissed with a laugh or considered an expected part of his character,[32] Reid's transgressions are treated more severely – he is accused of causing his wife's downfall. After finding out about her husband's affair with Mrs. Goren, Emily is found half-naked in a drunken daze in an East End ditch and eventually dies. Although the treatment of these women, as Weissman writes, implies Reid's moral corruption (282), the detective's downfall culminates with his compromised decisions as to the treatment of Jedediah Shine and Horace Buckley.

Upon revealing that the K Division Detective, Inspector Shine, is involved in trafficking heroin, killing his own officer and the toy-tradesman Nathaniel Hinchcliffe, Reid, having run out of all options, decides to murder Shine in a divisional boxing match with Detective Drake, who eventually withdraws. As for the latter, after finding out that his daughter Mathilda was not dead but held captive in an East End cellar by an antiquities dealer Horace Buckley, Reid takes his head in his hands, slowly smashing it against the support beam until the man slumps to the floor, his head a bloody pulp. Afterward, his daughter Mathilda accuses him of absolving his horrendous act as justifiable homicide: "You broke his head open up on a wood pillar. You smashed his brains from him. There is a testimony from

[32] For example, in "Tournament of Shadows," Reid threatens to arrest Captain Jackson "For whore-mongering, for brawling, for pistol-wielding, for card-fixing. If there is a decency upheld by law in this land, it is a law you will have broken" (00:08:47-00:08:57).

Bobby Grace. No shard of glass, no necessary defense of yourself, only murder. A defenseless man killed in cold blood by your hand" ("A Brittle Thread" 00:50:20-00:50:35). In this moment, Reid clearly relinquishes the detective's detachment, revealing how his project is propelled by the "fatal, irresistible passion!" (Baudelaire qtd. in McDonough 106) for the Other that depends on criminality for its very existence (McDonough 107). In this libidinal tangle, the pursuer and the pursued lose their precise polarities because their movements follow in the footsteps of one another (Ibid.). To draw from McDonough, it remains unclear if Reid is merely studying his "suspect" or if he is "the sociopath" stalking his prey, driven by obsessive desire (108). In season one finale, "A Man of My Company," Emily accuses Edmund of causing their daughter's death during the sinking of the steamer *SS Princess Alice* on the Thames in September 1888, due to his obsessive devotion to, as she says, "stalking" the Ripper. Because of his failure to catch the Ripper, Reid is, throughout the series, obsessively focused on establishing order in Whitechapel. Throughout the seasons, the Ripper persona persists as an unsolvable uncertainty, a phantom that is stalking Reid from the shadows and, according to McDonough's thoughts on the dissolution of the pursuer versus the pursued dialectical opposition (120), a shadow that is obsessively stalked by Reid himself.

The corruption that takes its hold with the attempted murder of Jedediah Shine, and culminates with the murder of Horace Buckley, seemingly implies Reid's moral monstrosity. For according to Foucault's theoretical formulations, the characteristic of moral monstrosity is attributed to individuals who violate social pacts and place their own interests above societal laws. Driven by the desire for revenge, the honorable Reid prefers chaos to order, temporarily disdains morality by decisively rejecting its laws, and commits a capital crime (Foucault 7; 65) – first-degree homicide of Horace Buckley. Still, Detective Drake says: "There is a darkness in this place. An abyss, Mister Reid called it. And it can take from a man all he holds in his heart. As long as he walks these streets, it will shortly find him and swallow him" ("Ashes and Diamonds" 00:36:10-00:36:29). Drake's comment draws attention to the fact that, although the series provides an often-overlooked formulation of East End as a haven and a home to its poorest inhabitants, it still stands as a beacon testifying to civilization's corruption. In Drake's description, East End transforms into an anthropomorphic agent of one's destruction or, to paraphrase Wolfreys, into a deadly disease, spreading its demoralizing and corruptive influence everywhere (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 49). Therefore, it is safe to say that regardless of its alternative articulation, East End also endures as a locus of

moral corruption, degeneracy, and decay, its streets serving as exemplary sites for the enactment of monstrosity (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 9; 12). Since East End signifies chaos, crime, and death, the detective's attempt at mastering it is ambivalent. To Reid, this city can be spatially mastered and, at the same time, it is threatening – its double articulation demands two types of behaviors that teeter between being law-abiding and transgressive. For example, evident throughout the episodes are Reid's appalled facial expressions at the idea of inflicting pain upon others. Not having the stomach to torment another man, Reid often resorted to Detective Drake and his investigative "methods." Elsewhere, the detective is not described as a bedfellow with ways of violence, having an innate taste for torturing inmates, but as someone who wishes to correct the darkness of the world in which he serves with dedication. Captain Jackson substantiates such a statement by saying: "Do no harm. It's the first and most abiding maxim by which you practice by. And yet you have done plenty. I've seen it. Only when sorely pressed and never to a soul that didn't have it coming. You had a moral imperative" ("A White World Made Red" 00:46:39-00:46:54). Furthermore, drawing from Wolfreys, who proposes that personal relationships are unattainable in a city that is clearly characterized by disappointed desires and addictions (*The Trace of the Urban Text* 104), it is possible to read Reid's aforementioned "amoral" approach to his chosen companions as a direct consequence of East End's demoralizing effect.

As argued, the end-of-century East End is decisively dual, simultaneously symbolizing a space-place. While the dark-garbed and devoted subordinate of the glorious Empire sees it as threatening, there is one figure that finds himself "at home" among its irrationality – the criminal. This is because the city's caliginous conditions, that is, the darkness and unfavorable weather, make possible transgressive behavioral patterns while simultaneously sheltering them (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 22). After all, Reid contends that "wickedness will ever leave its spores here" ("The King Came Calling" 00:57:38-00:57:42) and Drake that "this borough here has a taste for monsters, for their birthing and nature" ("The Stranger's Home Part 2" 00:05:58-00:06:00). Mere months after the Ripper's rampage, the H Division detectives have to deal with Arthur Donaldson, a pioneer of early pornographic photography and a producer and performer in one of the first Victorian "snuff" films. Donaldson seduced prostitutes by giving them grapes, and then he would drug them with chemically compromised Turkish delight, and abduct them to a secret site where he would rape them just before strangling them to death during filming. Based on Donaldson's behavioral patterns, it

can be argued that the prevalent phenomenon of the series' opening episode is sadism that, according to Carel's formulation of Freud, appears as aggressive acting-out discharged onto others (53). Carel argues that all drives are decidedly cyclic as they do not have a definitive aim (8). Donaldson's behavior misses both a meaningful motive and a specific aim, evident in the all-engulfing tendency toward the repeated satisfaction of his rapacious proclivities. One observes prostitute after prostitute entering the aristocrat's carriage, only to be abused as a means of gaining gratification that is always already momentary. Therefore, Donaldson's drives are only ever temporarily satisfied, testifying to an interrelation among themselves and repetition compulsion (8; 120). If drives require repeated release, Donaldson's craving for the frequent consumption of women is to be expected. After its accomplishment, the drive is discharged and replaced with a temporal sense of satisfaction. According to Carel's deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism, such satisfaction should be specified as extensive narcissistic enjoyment (28). After abducting one of the series' protagonists, prostitute Rose Erskine, Donaldson brutally beats her and forces her to watch one of his first snuff films before drugging her again and dressing her up as a slave girl. Donaldson, dressed as Caesar, starts raping and suffocating Rose with a choke-chain. The disproportion of power between the dominant "Caesar," and the subordinate slave girl being choked while helplessly lying on her back, affirms the argument that aggressive acting-out produces excessive enjoyment. It is safe to say that, since Donaldson's aggressiveness is accompanied by strong sexual arousal, the enjoyment engendered by sadism is of sexual nature.

The third episode of the first season, "The King Came Calling," portrays yet another individual whose behavioral patterns could be asserted as aggressive acting-out discharged onto others – Claxton, the manager of an East End bakery who wants to mass murder its population by marketing arson-poisoned pastry. By the end of the episode, Claxton confesses that he had no fixed target or objective but aimed at creating chaos that, in turn, testifies to the fact that aggressive acting out is absent of an actual aim (Carel 8). Aggressive acting-out is also accompanied by extensive narcissistic enjoyment, evident in Reid's explanation that the villain who caused dozens of deaths of men, women, and children in a mere matter of days, will be hiding somewhere in the streets because he wants to see the effect of his strenuous efforts ("The King Came Calling"). In Caxton's case, the enjoyment endangered by sadism is not of sexual nature. To him, the murders testify to his magnificence; each casualty places him in proximity to the infamous Ripper, who, contrary to Claxton, only managed to murder

seven victims: “That man. The Ripper. His brutality. How many? Seven? At most? And his name, all set to haunt this city for a thousand years. I have already tripled his score. Think how long they’ll talk of me” (“The King Came Calling” 00:50:18-00:50:51). Therefore, it can be said that the primary purpose of both Donaldson’s and Claxton’s aggressive acting-out is acquiring pleasure.

According to Foucault’s arguments, the marker of moral monstrosity is present precisely in those individuals who give priority to personal interests, no matter the consequences. In particular, such individuals are incapable of interpersonal interaction and social integration, choose chaos, frequently commit immoral acts, are capable of resorting to criminal behavior, and are prone to violent outbursts (Foucault 7; 65). Both Donaldson and Clarkson are unable to fully integrate into upper and middle-class society due to the irregularity of interests that motivate their aberrant actions. While the former physically abuses prostitutes, afterward asphyxiating them, the latter is intended on mass-murdering individuals. Their actions affirm their tendency toward chaos that disobeys both bar and civilization. Therefore, crime is best defined as aggressive acting-out projected onto others. Of course, not all criminal actions are stimulated by the destructive discharge of sadism to procure pleasure. While this may be true for upper and middle-class citizens, the poorest of the poor often resort to crime as a means of survival. For example, the beforementioned child criminals belonging to Carmichael’s circle do not murder and then cut out the tongues of their casualties for pleasure – their sole motivation is survival on the merciless streets of East End.

Donaldson and Claxton consciously decide to commit both the physical abuses, asphyxiations, and mass murders in the East End precisely because it is a locus of all-sorts of criminal actions. The fundamental function of an already-corrupted ambiance is to camouflage the destructive discharge of sadism and to facilitate temporary freedom from the filaments and systemic restrictions of nineteenth-century Victorian society. Following Lukić and Parezanović’s postulation that spaces are subverted by the serial killer’s aggressive drives (6), the subchapter contends that these criminals inscribe East End’s topography with the marker of monstrosity. According to phenomenology’s and human geography’s arguments that inform the interpretative direction of the dissertation, places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription. Places are specific sites shaped by individual actions and interpersonal interactions and not immutable and unchanging. Therefore, the marker of

monstrosity cannot be a particular place's *a priori* property. Despite its double articulation, the end-of-century East End still endures as a locus of corruption, degeneracy, and decay (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 9). Therefore, East End demands two types of "responses" from its H Division detectives; responses that teeter between being law-abiding and morally ambiguous. Conversely, for its figures of transgression, it facilitates that which restricts the former. In this regard, the relationship between the space-place of the East End and the myriad articulation of monstrosity is cyclical. To paraphrase Wolfreys, the criminals do not only make East End complicit in the enactment of transgressive behavioral patterns (*Inventions of the City* 9), but their actions obscure its other, more "positive," representations, momentarily re-marking it as monstrous.

2.3. Conclusion – Reinventing the City

The figure of Jack the Ripper, the faceless prowler in the foggy East End night, will always have a firm hold on our imagination. As Wolfreys writes, "It is as if the history of the city is written in the blood of its victims" (*Memory, Materiality, Spectrality* 157). Taking into consideration that the Ripper myth still resonates throughout popular culture, it seems as if Whitechapel will continue to be haunted by his monstrous mementos, which are, to paraphrase Wolfreys, almost inscribed into its very topography (Ibid.). While Hunter's novel partially reinvents the myth by positioning Thomas Dare, the upper-class professor of phonetics, as the Ripper, Warlow's television series merely employs the myth to manipulate with spectatorial expectations, eventually emphasizing that its plot revolves not so much around the Ripper as it does around the streets themselves. Aside from the Ripper persona, the two neo-Victorian narratives reintroduce and, partially, reinvent the end-of-century East End. At first, Hunter conveys the truth of the city by applying formulaic, *fin de siècle* tropes, emphasizing East End's adverse atmospheric conditions, its architectural irrationality, visible in the wild confusion of dilapidated dwellings and the filth-splattered streets that twist without order, its inhumane living conditions that can dismantle individual identities, and by characterizing the crowd as all-threatening. To its ordinary citizens, the city offers a sensation of otherworldliness whereby images are blurred by the brightness of gas lamps and specific scenes by incidental illumination. Therefore, to paraphrase Wolfreys, Hunter's city is characterized by unknowability and unlocability, a sharply experienced sensation of

"nowhereness" that is everywhere the same and the same everywhere (*The Trace of the Urban Text* 142).

Still, as a place of nefarious pleasures, Hunter's East End entices both middle and upper-class citizens to escape exact Victorian values and appease their illicit inclinations. In such instances, the spectators get a glimpse of East End's often overlooked formulation that, instead of only signifying otherness, resonates with a feeling of familiarity. As for *Ripper Street*, in spite of its initial setting, the portrayal of the police as ineffective, and the discussed duality between the West and East End, the series partially reinvents and reconstructs the end-of-century city, offering an articulation that goes beyond the archetypal representations of the late nineteenth century. To achieve this articulation, Warlow dispenses with the figure of the Ripper as a major component of late-century iconography, he shows East End in daylight, which, it is argued, demystifies its inexplicability, and he describes and details the lives of individuals traditionally depicted as abject. To clarify, neither Hunter nor Warlow have created a "new" city, but both have managed to find a hidden city, moderately abandoning, as Wolfreys writes, "the monotonous monstrosity of the self-same" that shrouds the East End in a threatening, disquieting, and disorienting miasma (*Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* 26; 35). In this regard, both have partially reinvented the city, providing a performative articulation that transcends the dark, distinctly Dickensian spaces of squalor and poverty.

Comfortably fluctuating between the two articulations of the city is the figure of the flâneur. The two subchapters underlined both Dare's and Reid's transformation from the traditionally conceptualized figure of the flâneur into the stalker/serial killer, and, in Reid's case, to the detective whose behavioral patterns point toward his cryptic connection to criminal acts of all sorts. These transformations allow for a different definition of the flâneur as a disruptive agent who demonstrates the predatory traits present beneath the façade of Benjamin's apparently benign figure. As stated in the chapter's introduction, although the archetypal flâneur is, perhaps, no longer relevant, the two subchapters have attempted to broaden the conceptual boundaries that have constricted the figure in its supposed redundancy. Furthermore, the two subchapters have highlighted that, while Reid's *other*-oriented practices are a direct result of the city's double articulation that demands two types of responses that teeter between being law-abiding and transgressive, Dare's practices positively trigger the transformation into a criminal *par excellence* – the serial killer.

Although *I, Ripper* and Warlow's *Ripper Street*, to paraphrase Esser, portrays traumatic past experiences, often-terrifying secrets and transgressive acts, it does not portray them as belonging to the space of East End *per se*, but stemming from one's psyche (153). While the former firmly connects criminality to the return of the once-repressed drives in the form of aggressive acting-out projected onto others for pleasure, the latter, as Esser explains, also acknowledges poverty and greed, which are unintentionally produced by the city but do not belong to it, as major causes of criminality (163). The central argument of the two subchapters is that these moral monsters, as postulated by Foucault, while committing gruesome acts such as murder and bodily mutilation, mark the streets of East End with the marker of monstrosity. Precisely, drawing on Lukić and Parezanović's postulation that the serial killer subverts the spaces that once shaped his experience via the inscription of aggressive drives (6), and phenomenology's and human geography's argument according to which places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, the subchapters stressed that the marker of monstrosity cannot be a place's *a priori* property. Even though Hunter's East End and the conventional monster inhabit a common conceptual terrain in that they are averse to different forms of familiarization, the city is not a conscious and autonomously active agent. *Ripper Street* depicts the dialectical movement between the positive/negative tension in an even more radical manner, acknowledging East End as a locus of anxiety and, at the same time, emphasizing its existence as a safe shelter and a voluntary home to its inhabitants. Finally, the relationship between the East End and the troubling figure of transgression is cyclical. To paraphrase Wolfreys, the figure does not merely use East End as a setting to stage the enactment of monstrous behavior (*Inventions of the City* 9). Every encounter between the monstrous subject and East End presupposes the inscription of non-oneiric content. In this regard, East End's atmospheric and architectural conditions allow for the articulation of monstrosity that, in turn, construes that same setting as monstrous.

3. The Haunted Domestic Space

In *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Horace Walpole introduced the trope of the damsel in distress, confined by a familial or familiar antagonist until the arrival of a long-forgotten protagonist who eventually manages to liberate her through marriage. Above all, he introduced the trope of the haunted castle, initiating the invisible slippage between the seemingly contrasting concepts of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. However, as Rebecca Janicker rightfully highlights, although Walpole's *Otranto* marked the origin of "literary hauntings," the events it expressed were fleeting and fragmented – they embodied mere symbols of otherworldly menace rather than meaningful encounters with more complex entities that appeared in subsequent haunted house stories (*The Literary Haunted House* 2).[33] Conversely, Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1788) introduced the most important feature of the forenamed fiction; more refined than those of Walpole, Reeve's ghosts exhibited motivations and memories, thus acting as autonomous agents and not as mere echoes of past events and emotions (2). Although Reeve successfully associated supernatural appearances with physical places, adding an element of psychological depth, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that Edgar Allan Poe started featuring domestic settings in his fiction (Ibid.). According to Janicker, the use of familiar or, specifically, familial spaces and the subsequent emphasis on psychological sources and experiences of fear helped pave the way for ghost stories (6). Although the castle has, throughout literary and film history, been transmuted into the manor or mansion, the haunted house, or even the hotel, it has retained its relevance in popular culture.[34] In the consecutive case study subchapters, I am primarily interested in investigating two haunted houses, important for their inversion of the house as, according to Gaston Bachelard's argument, a "felicitous place," a foundation of individual lives (*The Poetics of*

[33] At the beginning of *The Castle of Otranto*, Manfred's son and heir, Conrad, is killed by a helmet that mysteriously falls from the sky. This "accident" is not only sinister because the helmet kills Conrad, but also because it brings to light "an ancient prophecy. . . that the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it" (Walpole 11).

[34] From novels such as Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), Tony Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Mark Z. Danielewski's *The House of Leaves* (2003), to films and television series such as M. Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense* (1999), Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others* (2001), James Wan's *The Conjuring* (2013), Ryan Murphy's *American Horror Story: Murder House* (2013), or Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak* (2015), to name just a few, it is evident that this once-minor motif has endured in literature, television, and film.

Space 35). One of the first things that come to mind when one thinks of a haunted house narrative is, of course, its unsettling setting.

Specifically, such a house invokes the image of an often abandoned, isolated, dark, decrepit, and immensely dangerous building. It is indeed, in Bachelard's words, an "unforgettable" house, but its structure no longer stimulates a "passionate liaison" (15) with its inhabitants but an all-engulfing, estranging sensation. Such a sensation spatializes the inhabitants within settings that are divorced from familiar and familial experiences. Imbued with repressed content that is instigated into seamlessly intruding upon the present, the haunted house delineates the often overlooked, dark, and disturbing side of Bachelard's poetics of space. Precisely, in line with Bachelard's argument, the house's primary function is to protect its inhabitants against external intrusions. With the disturbance and deconstruction of its homely nature, the haunted house proves to be a particularly interesting inversion of the house's fundamental symbolic function. No longer nurturing the intimate interrelation between itself and its inhabitants, it becomes "unfamiliar" or, better said, "un-familial." The two consecutive case study subchapters aim at analyzing Richard Matheson's commercially successful novel *Hell House* (1971) and Mike Flanagan's still more successful television series *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018).[35] Seemingly different, with the former published almost fifty years before the latter, both have been influenced by the publication of Shirley Jackson's immensely influential novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959).[36] The opening paragraph of Jackson's novel, often called one of the most influential gothic novels of the 20th

[35] At the time of writing the dissertation, there were no published articles with the same approach relating to Matheson's *Hell House* nor Flanagan's *The Haunting of Hill House.*

[36] In creating the character of Dr. Lionel Barret, Matheson drew inspiration from Jackson's Dr. John Montague, a parapsychologist who is hoping to prove the existence of supernatural entities by conducting research with the help of a carefully selected group of psychically "sensitive" individuals, intended to spend a portion of summer at the supposedly haunted Hill House. Moreover, Flanagan's series, while deviating considerably from Jackson's novel, nonetheless draws inspiration from it. For example, Dr. Montague's volunteers are Theodora, who has extrasensory perception, Luke, the house's heir, and Nell, an emotionally distraught woman haunted by the death of her mother. Additionally, Shirley's character is a homage to Jackson herself.

century (King qtd. in Schmitz 24), plays into the familiar tropes of haunted house fiction.[37] Thus, my initial aim was to use the novel for one of the case study subsections. However, as several scholars, such as Dale Bailey and Rahel Sixta Schmitz, have already highlighted, Jackson's novel is the precursor to the now-popular haunted house formula that positions the building's sentience as the most important part of its architecture (Bailey 25; Schmitz 26). In such novels, buildings manifest a monstrously malevolent self-consciousness and become parasitic or predatory entities that want to drain the life energy out of their occupants. Conversely, my aim was to select two case studies that were influenced by Jackson's novel, but that have veered off the tracks in positioning the haunted house's potential "personality" as either self-projected by its inhabitants or formed by its original owners. As will be stated in the two subsections, both Flanagan's series and Matheson's novel demonstrate that this sentience is nothing more than a sensation that has been self-projected by the house's sensitive or psychologically unstable inhabitants. The two houses are mere assemblages of bricks, blocks, and mortar, and, as will be argued, nothing more than an accumulation of one's experiences.

Moreover, both the television series and the novel were chosen because they offer the possibility of perceiving the haunted house as a projection of the non-oneiric content of its original owner. Thus, the analysis goes beyond the approach of examining its external and internal elements and suggests that there are other sensations hidden in the realm of the homely. These sensations reveal the dark side of domesticity that destabilizes the idealized traits of the domestic imaginary as per Bachelard's arguments. While more recent research often aims at analyzing the haunted house as awakened, assuming its own "infernal biology" (Magistrale, *Abject Terror* 90), as eventually evolving into an antagonist that actively subordinates the spectral presences that populate it (Bailey, *American Nightmares* 57-58), as alive and actively *haunting* its inhabitants (Schmitz, *Haunted by a House* 6; emphasis added), or as a sentient, "shape-shifting," and "reactive supernatural force" that wants to ingest its victims (Curtis, *Dark Places* 53), the subchapters intend to argue that the two haunted houses

[37] For a detailed discussion on the opening paragraph, see Schmitz's *Haunted by a House* (2015), especially the subchapter "The Hauntings of Hill House" (pp. 30-38).

and all of the propensities they portray originate in their owners.[38] To argue that the houses are initially inscribed and, afterward, abused as instruments of haunting it is necessary to, so to say, take a step back and inquire into the importance of the house itself and its interrelation with its inhabitants.

Bachelard explains how every house is, first and foremost, an "object" (3). At the same time, he suspects whether such a view can represent the reason behind the inhabitants' "attachment" to it (Ibid). By introducing topoanalysis, or "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (8), he can examine how the house extends beyond its structural signification, becoming, in turn, the expression of its inhabitant's interiority. By becoming the expression or embodiment of one's interiority, Bachelard acknowledges that it acquires autonomy, personifying it as an autonomous protector that "girds its loins" (46), preparing itself to defend its inhabitants from an outside attack. In doing so, it is ready to "bend with the blast" (Ibid.), sacrificing itself for their well-being.[39] However, he also highlights that, as the "normal unconsciousness" abides, it finds itself "happily housed in the space of its happiness" (10). Put differently, Bachelard considers the house as a repository of exclusively oneiric experiences and, thus, of the half-dreaming consciousness that he calls reverie,[40] although he admits that each place is interwoven with one's existence, which would

[38] It is important to stress that the subchapter's intention is not to invalidate the authors' analyses. For example, in "The Haunted House" (2006), Stephen Mariconda positions the haunted house as "a dwelling that is inhabited by or visited regularly by a ghost or other supposedly supernatural being" (268). At the same time, he stresses that the definition can consist of different elements that are, in fact, endless – for example, the structure of the house itself, its historical "circumstances, and the potential physical and emotional repercussions" it can evoke in its guests can vary from one narrative to another (Ibid.). Thus, these authors, much like myself, employ the theoretical articulations they consider to be the most adequate in analyzing the infinitely variable haunted house narratives.

[39] Bachelard writes that "faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body. It braces itself to receive the downpour, it girds its loins. When forced to do so, it bends with the blast, confident that it will right itself again in time, while continuing to deny any temporary defeats" (46).

[40] In *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos* (1934), Bachelard argues how reverie differs from a dream because, in the latter, the subject loses their being (147). In comparison to a dream, reverie is coherent because the subject can simultaneously imagine themselves and the image. Additionally,

also imply the underlying existence of an "abnormal" unconsciousness.[41] Because Bachelard believes that the essential function of this *exemplar* of place is to protect one's memories, to "secure" them and "fix" them in space (9), he was often criticized for not considering the "dark corners" of the house, the non-felicitous places of the unspeakable.[42] Despite received criticism, his contribution remains invaluable because it elucidates the attributes that arise as a result of the process of dwelling. Namely, places are affective, meaning that they are always already partial because inhabitants establish emotions toward them. Inspired by Bachelard's assertion that the house is the most affective of all places, Yi-Fu Tuan proposes that places are non-existent prior to the inscription of individual experience. While Bachelard interprets the house as any sort of inhabited space (5), Tuan states that the transformation of space occurs whenever an object draws our attention, meaning that, at one extreme, even one's favorite armchair could be transformed into a place (*Space and Place* 149). By identifying transformation as the inscription of individual meaning, Tuan emphasizes the relationality of

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reverie is a function of the soul that enables the image to reverberate *ad infinitum*: "The mind is able to relax, but in poetic reverie the soul keeps watch, with no tension, calmed and active" (*The Poetics of Space* xxii).

[41] Bachelard writes that psychoanalysis proves its effectiveness in exploring "the ousted unconscious, of the unconscious that has been roughly or insidiously dislodged" (10). However, because Bachelard is primarily interested in exploring the inner "domains of intimacy" (12), which are always attractive since they signify "virtues of shelter" (12), and never repulsive because they are permeated by the "insidiously dislodged" (10) contents of one's unconscious, he breaks away from psychoanalytic explorations of lived places.

[42] Bachelard's view of the house as "the felicitous space" (35), the protective and nurturing pre-existing being "cast into the world" (7), was often criticized for its historical alienation. Many feminist geographers (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; Mallett, 2004) have argued that by fixing the house into its comfort of *being*, instead of acknowledging the possibility of its *becoming*, Bachelard regressed into passivity. Specifically, such "passivity" or nostalgia negates the fact that the home can turn into a place of sexual abuse, violence, or tyranny, a place to which individuals do not go to but from which they flee to outdoor spaces that offer safety. For example, Gillian Rose thus states that human geographers often erase the experiences of women, negating the importance of the interrelation between place and power (*Feminism and Geography* 11). Massey, on the other hand, states that the human geography's perception is positively static as it symbolizes a "recourse to a past, of a seamless coherence of character, of an apparently comforting bounded enclosure" (*Space, Place, and Gender* 168). Finally, Shelley Mallett states that "the characterization of home as a haven is an expression of an idealized, romanticized, even nostalgic notion of home at odds with the reality of peoples' lived experience of home" ("Understanding Home" 72).

place, negating its existence *a priori*. Immediately impacted by phenomenology,[43] Tuan does not define the house as a neutral container of physical objects but as a direct outcome of the process of dwelling, whose accumulated meaning mirrors the inhabitants who have initially inscribed it. He thus opens up the possibility of a psychoanalytic understanding of the process of transforming space into place but is ultimately hesitant in pursuing that path. Although he acknowledges that places are indicative of the individuals who initially inscribed them, he does not discuss the possibility of inscribing non-oneiric content and, most importantly, he opposes the perception of places as mirroring individuals' interiorities.

However, I am not primarily interested in the inscription of oneiric experiences of both phenomenology and human geography but, since I am analyzing the interrelation between places and monstrous selves, in the covertly dislodged content of the unconscious, indistinctly implied by both Bachelard via his emphasis on the phenomenology of the hidden (xxxvii)[44] and Tuan via his argument that architecture is revelatory of the people who wrote it ("Geography, Phenomenology" 183).[45] Still, because the study of the interrelation between the house and its original owner presupposes the positioning of the former as a relational concept that is always already affective, their contribution remains crucial. At the same time, it is important to stress that most scholars interested in haunted house narratives often engage with the well-established *heimlich*/*unheimlich* antithesis, as most haunted house narratives represent the transition from domestic place to haunted space. Since its etymological source is observable in the word *Heim*, or home, the concept of the *heimlich* suggests a spatialization in

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[43] In his article "Geography, Phenomenology, and the Study of Human Nature" (1971), Tuan positions phenomenology as a prominent school of European thought which had little impact on geography. Tuan is to suggest that phenomenology is not a "mechanistic" science as it focuses on human experiences. In his opinion, phenomenology and geography should be codependent for the latter to study "neither 'man' in the abstract nor the 'world' in the abstract but 'man-in-the-world'" (191). In other words, only with the application of phenomenology can geography become "the mirror of man" (181) or that which "reveals man" (Ibid.).

[44] In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard states that "Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are 'housed'" (xxxvii).

[45] In his article, Tuan argues that "a careful reading of the house can tell us much about the occupant" ("Geography, Phenomenology" 181). He will return to this argument, once more, in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) by discussing how individuals form attachment to home, the neighborhood, and the nation.

the context of one's familiar or, specifically, family-like setting. As soon as the uncanny is instigated into returning, the subject becomes spatialized outside the setting of the *heimlich*. In other words, the house oscillates between being a safe haven and a hellish setting. It is safe to say that its inhabitants perceive it indistinctly, experiencing disorientation because of its inherent duality. The two subchapters will thus draw from Freud's understanding of the uncanny, because the uncanny, as a psychological experience of something strangely familiar, yet ultimately ungraspable, subverts the precept that one's sense of sight provides comprehension of and certitude in one's surroundings. Therefore, it is important to stress the significance Freud's spatial implications have had in developing the dissertation's tentative theoretical framework. At the same time, interrelating Bachelard's and Tuan's spatial implications with Freud's might seem far-fetched. However, in *Spacing Freud: Space and Place in Psychoanalytic Theory* (2012), Nicholas Dion argues that, although psychoanalysis is guilty of ignoring the importance of spatiality in Freud's work, spatial studies are more guilty of systematically eschewing engagement with psychoanalysis (20-21). Accordingly, he aims at positioning psychoanalysis as a spatial science by singling out Freud's usage of latent spatial concepts in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) and "The Ego and the Id" (1923).[46]

However, among all of Freud's concepts, the one that comes closest to signifying a spatial construct is, as stated, the *unheimlich*, first put forward in Freud's 1919 homonymous publication. Instead of the phantasmagorical places of dream-memory that permeate Bachelard's poetics of dwelling, Freud reformulated the Jentschian understanding of the uncanny as stemming from uncertain or undecidable sensations, that is, from intellectual uncertainty.[47] Originating from the *unheimlich,* the uncanny translates to the unhomely,

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[46] For example, Freud's formulation of mourning as a "reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal" (qtd. in Dion 121), broadens the initial implication of mourning as a direct outcome of the death of a loved one, introducing instead the possibility of mourning the loss of particular places due to the affective attachment individuals cultivate toward them because places, analogously to people, contain both meaning and memories (Ibid.). A spatial discourse is also deployed in Freud's "The Ego and the Id" (1923), where spatial relations, such as "in front of," "behind," "superficial," and "deep," emphasize the relationship between the entities as a result of the regular succession of their functions (Dion 96).

[47] Freud begins his 1919 essay, "Das Unheimliche," by referring to Ernst Jentsch's "Über die Psychologie des Unheimlichen" (1906), which interconnects the uncanny with intellectual uncertainty or, more

unfamiliar, uncomfortable, operating as a negation of the *heimlich* that, in turn, implies the homely, familiar, and comfortable. However, Freud's detailed etymological research reveals that *heimlich* contains two meanings – a literal (familiar or home-like) and a symbolic (unfamiliar or un-home-like) one. Accordingly, by acknowledging the affiliation between the two, Freud is able to assert the uncanny as the return of the repressed, the re-emergence of once-covert content.[48] Furthermore, he proposes one of its potent spatial embodiments – "*ein unheimliches Haus* ['an uncanny house'] [which] can be rendered only by the periphrasis 'a haunted house'" ("The Uncanny" 148). Although Freud affirms that the haunted house is, in its own definition, an unhomely or an "anti" or "adverse" home, he argues that its initial literary function was to provoke terror through gruesome effect, and not through the discomfort caused by the return of the repressed (Ibid.). Still, it can be argued that the latter has become the essential effect of the haunted house, particularly when a writer "betrays us to a superstition we thought we had 'surmounted'; he tricks us by promising us everyday reality and then going beyond it" ("The Uncanny" 157). But, because Freud did not elaborate on the spatial implications of the uncanny, the chapter's further analysis will be informed by Anthony Vidler's *The Architectural Uncanny* (1992).

Throughout Vidler's deconstructive theory of architecture, the unhomely can equally "erupt in empty parking lots around abandoned or run-down shopping-malls, in the screened

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precisely, with "doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive or conversely whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate" (qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 135). As summarized by Freud, Jentsch argues that "the uncanny would always be an area in which a person was unsure of his way around" (qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 125). Although Freud agrees that lack of "orientation," or of "knowing one's way about," might excite feelings of uncanniness, he opposes the argument that intellectual uncertainty is its primary motivator.

[48] In "Repression" (1915), Freud differentiates between external stimuli and instinctual impulses in that the only available method for "fending off" the latter is rejection based on judgment (141). He argues that instinctual impulses may encounter resistance, the goal of which is to paralyze them into a state of repression (Ibid.). Repression occurs because the satisfaction of such instinctual impulses, although possible, would contradict other claims and intentions. Namely, the force of unpleasure would acquire "more strength than the pleasure obtained from satisfaction" ("Repression" 142). Furthermore, Freud argues that repression is not an inherent defensive mechanism but arises when an individual becomes aware of the distinction between conscious and unconscious mental content – in this regard, "the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious" (Ibid.).

trompe l'oeil of simulated space, in, that is, the wasted margins and surface appearances of post-industrial culture" (3). However, Vidler states that ever since the nineteenth century, the uncanny has found its, so to say, "first" home in the seemingly benign house "that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror" (11). While Freud is hesitant in pursuing a possible connection between the two because of the aforementioned "gruesomeness" tied to the concept of the haunted house, Vidler underlines the unhomely as the "domesticated version of absolute terror, to be experienced in the comfort of the home" (3). Afterward, he acknowledges Freud's implications by stating that the haunted house was initially seen as the *exemplar* of the uncanny, providing a site for perpetual portrayals of haunting, doubling, and dismembering on the account of "its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by the contrast of the terror of invasion by alien spirits" (17). Yet, although the uncanny initially found its "first" home in the house, a site susceptible to the "intrusion of terror" (11), Vidler refutes the pre-existence of uncanny places: "certainly no one building, no special effects of design can be guaranteed to provoke an uncanny feeling" (11). Referring to authors such as E.T.A. Hoffman and Edgar Allan Poe, Vidler outlines two of its objectives – firstly, to demonstrate an unsettling slippage between the dialectics of inside and outside, and secondly, to portray a psychological play of doubling in which the other is seen as a replica of the self (3). In particular, this "play of doubling" can also point toward the house operating as the "representation" of the subject's "mental state" (11). As he highlights: "the 'uncanny' is not a property of the space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation; it is . . . a representation of a mental state of projection that precisely elides the boundaries of the real and the unreal in order to provoke a disturbing ambiguity, a slippage between waking and dreaming" (Ibid.).

Accordingly, the architectural uncanny is not directly provoked by "special effects of design" of particular spaces but, in Vidler's words, by "spatial estrangement" or "the mingling of mental projection and spatial characteristics" (Ibid.). It can be argued that, contrary to both Bachelard's and Tuan's oneiric places, this "mingling" of mental and spatial characteristics creates non-oneiric spaces that "hide, in [their] darkest recesses and forgotten margins, all the objects of fear and phobia that have returned with such insistency to haunt the imaginations of those who have tried to stake out spaces to protect their health and happiness" (Vidler 167). However, the "objects of fear and phobia" have not returned, so to say, out of nowhere.

Therefore, in my view, the uncanny is understood as the experience of "spatial estrangement" (Vidler 11) provoked by the projection of the owner's non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it indefinitely. In keeping with phenomenology's and human geography's premise, this projection is not passive, but can be defined as a deliberate inscription that initially transformed the house into an affective accumulation. By its existence as an intentional embodiment of its owner's non-oneiric inscription, the house has consigned its inhabitants to a confusing state of liminality, who are spatialized somewhere in-between Vidler's "waking and dreaming" (11). Put differently, due to the disturbing encounter between these past inscriptions and the present, the inhabitants are divorced from everyday experiences. Because the uncanny, as Vidler underlines, stimulates a state of both spatial and temporal liminality, it endures as an elusive experience that refuses to be rationalized and, thus, clearly comprehended. Therefore, the invisibility or, better said, the simplicity with which the two haunted houses oscillate between being intimate places of the familiar to being places of the unfamiliar, affirms that the "disturbing ambiguity" (11) is not affected by the incursion of an external entity *per se*; the entity affects the slippage between the *heimlich*, and its contrast, *unheimlich*.

However, it is important to underline that *unheimlich* is still closely connected to the individual. Specifically, the house "slips" into an *unheimlich* state because someone has, so to say, "reunited" the subject with their imperfectly repressed impulses which, in Freud's words, provokes decided dread ("The Uncanny" 219). Following Freud's assessment, the architectural uncanny is not a purely aesthetic but a psychological phenomenon; it is the return of the repressed that sets into motion the slippage between the homely and unhomely and not places *per se*. Put simply, the slippage is not affected by the haunted house itself because the house is not, in line with Vidler's argument, an autonomous agent existing prior to the process of inscription. Moreover, the uncanny is not an *a priori* "property" of a particular place (Vidler 11) that can be independently invoked by it because it has, all of a sudden, secured the position of an autonomous antagonist. It can be argued that the tendency to perceive places as uncanny in themselves counters both Freud's and Vidler's postulations. Thus, the chapter contends that the repressed never returns, so to say, out of nowhere. In the context of the two subsequent case studies, it is provoked into appearing during the process of dwelling by an entity that has always been contained within the house, patiently waiting for its "victims" – the ghost.

Stereotypical in its inversion of the house's symbolic function, the haunted house has become fused with the supernatural entities it encloses. Julia Briggs, in her study of the English ghost story, states that these entities "represent the return of the repressed in its most literal and paradigmatic form" (*Night Visitors* 178). In the context of haunted house fiction, this perception of repression refers to an almost archetypal portrayal of one's disturbing past encroaching on one's seemingly serene present, often represented by the literal resurrection of a once-safely buried entity that has come back to discomfort the living once and for all. For example, in *Dark Places: The Haunted House in Film* (2008), Barry Curtis claims: "Ghosts are committed to re-enacting emplaced grievances, withdrawing, as they do so, to margins and unfrequented places" (*Dark Places* 63). However, to my mind, ghosts are not mere metaphors or vehicles for the return of the repressed. Those whom they haunt display an awareness of their autonomous agency. At the same time, defining "ghost" and its subsequent synonyms, such as "apparition," "specter," "spirit," "phantom," "presence," "wraith," is difficult because, like Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren claim, "ghosts are everywhere these days" (*Popular Ghosts* ix). The authors acknowledge its abundant definitions, stressing its simplest one: "the soul of a deceased person, spoken of as appearing in a visible form, or otherwise manifesting its presence, to the living" (*Popular Ghosts* x). The ghost is initially identified in its supernatural or otherworldly origin, and interpreted as an *out*-standing figure of interruption. However, it can be argued that this results in a restrictive definition of ghosts. Sometimes, such a perspective degrades the potential complexity of spectral presences to passive entities that aimlessly mop and moan about the mansion. Both authors agree that by perceiving ghosts as present, yet insubstantial, secondary rather than primary, and potentially unreal or deceptive, we devoid them of their complexities (Ibid.). At the same time, the authors acknowledge that ghosts have recently emerged as analytical tools, theorizing "a variety of social, ethical, and political questions" (*Popular Ghosts* 2).[49] Thus, Peeren is to

[49] Blanco and Peeren suggest that ever since the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*: *The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (1993), the ghost has attracted academic attention across different disciplines, pointing toward the advent of a new point of interest in the humanities and social sciences – "what some have called the 'spectral turn'" (*The Spectralities Reader* 2). Accordingly, the figure of the ghost has come to theorize a wide variety of dominant issues "such as the intricacies of memory and trauma, personal and collective; the workings and effects of scientific processes, technologies, and media; and the exclusionary, effacing dimensions of social norms pertaining to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class"

position the ghost as a "theoretical figuration . . . of the way history is constructed and impacts the present ("The Ghost as a Gendered Chronotope" 85). Drawing on Pereen's postulation, Zuzanna Dziuban states that otherworldly presences point toward the past's sudden and uncanny interruption of the present ("Memory as Haunting" 116). Because such interruption is often experienced as a disruption, the ghostly reappearance indicates the reemergence of the ostensibly buried past (Ibid.). However, not all ghosts make visible the elements of such a past. Some ghosts *do* more. In other words, not all ghosts fulfill their archetypal function, operating as mere metaphors for encounters with the frightening forms of otherness (Blanco and Peeren, *The Spectralities Reader* 3). Although ghosts are initially identified as traditional monsters of cosmological or anti-cosmological origin, the consecutive subchapters aim at construing them not as "mere metaphors" but as moral monsters according to Michel Foucault's and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's premise outlined in the introduction.

In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996), Cohen claims: "The monster *haunts*; it does not simply bring past and present together but destroys the boundary that demanded their twinned foreclosure" (ix-x). Because of its deliberate decision to actively haunt by "destroying the boundaries," it reintroduces the repressed content of the past into the present, thus interconnecting them. According to Cohen, "it commands, 'remember me:' restore my fragmented body, piece me back together, allow the past its eternal return" (ix). As will be discussed in detail, it is not the absent, yet the present body of both Emeric Belasco of Hell House and Poppy Hill of Hill House that marks them as monstrous, but their intentional instigation of the repressed past for the sole purpose of pleasure. While Belasco instigates the inhabitants' sexual impulses, drawing them into suicide, Poppy plays on the inhabitants' trauma, similarly seducing them into committing both suicide and murder. Therefore, these antagonists, although spectral, refuse to conform to the typical haunted house formula. Yet they do not oppose this formula in an explicit way, but instead, ask for an alternative

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(Ibid.). Similarly, Andrew Smith states that "[g]hosts are never just ghosts. They provide us with an insight into what haunts our culture," indicating "what it can only express in oblique terms" ("Hauntings" 153). Smith notes that the former relates to ghosts being projections of one's innermost anxieties, while the latter to ghosts being representations of the unpredictable nature of the economy, as observable in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843) (148-150). Furthermore, he adds that ghosts can also function as a means of evoking the history of family and slavery, as noted by Toni Morrison's Sethe in *Beloved* (1987) (152).

explanation that focuses on the absence of their morality. Thus, monstrosity is not simply a spectral, otherworldly force; it is a living force bent on the destruction of others. Additionally, the ghost does not merely inhabit a particular space; the ghost and the space it inhabits are in a reciprocal relationship. In other words, the owner who has initially affected the house now manipulates it into afflicting its inhabitants, setting into motion the slippage between the sensations of the supposedly familiar – *heimlich*, and the unfamiliar – *unheimlich*. Moreover, as I have construed the two ghosts as moral monsters, the subsequent subchapters intend to assert that the houses' supposedly monstrous propensities always extend from their owner's monstrous selves. At the same time, in line with Bachelard's premise of the house acquiring autonomous agency in instances of protecting its inhabitants from intrusions (46), I am interested in whether the house can be seen as a separate spatial entity. In other words, whether it can eventually act independently, subsequently becoming sentient and capable of afflicting both its owner and its "intruders" independently.

3.1.Richard Matheson's *Hell House* (1971)

The primary purpose of the subchapter is to analyze Hell House's outward appearance in order to argue that it is not uncanny in itself. Conversely, the uncanny will be construed as the sensation of "spatial estrangement" (Vidler 11) provoked by the projection of the original owner's non-oneiric content. According to phenomenology's and human geography's assertions that inform the interpretative direction of the dissertation, this projection can be defined as a deliberate inscription that initially altered the house into an affective accumulation. Specifically, the subchapter seeks to analyze how Emeric Belasco, initially imbuing the house with his "worst passions" (Matheson 35), now abuses it as an instrument to inflict its inhabitants, or, more precisely, how he sets into motion the slippage between the sensations of the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, affecting the experience of entrapment that spatializes the inhabitants in-between Anthony Vidler's "waking and dreaming" (11). Taking into consideration all of the deeds that Belasco either executed or encouraged during his lifetime, he will be defined as a moral monster. In other words, Belasco is not only a ghost and thus a type of monster, but his monstrosity is also underscored by his decision to deliberately haunt the inhabitants of the house for pleasure. By referring to Sigmund Freud's theory of repression, the subchapter aims at defining "haunting" as a deliberate instigation of

once buried instinctual impulses that have been manipulated into returning and, accordingly, reclaiming the house's subordinate subjects. Finally, the subchapter will examine whether the house eventually eclipses its original owner, evolving into an autonomous entity with, in Gaston Bachelard's words, a psyche of its own (46).

On December 18, 1970, Dr. Lionel Barrett visited an eighty-seven-year-old skeletal millionaire named Rolph Rudolph Deutsch. Barrett is a physicist studying parapsychology, hired by the dying millionaire to investigate the possibility of an afterlife "in the only place on earth . . . where survival has yet to be refuted" (Matheson 23). He is to visit Belasco House in Matawaskie Valley in Maine, "the Mount Everest of haunted houses" (33), a pesthole previously owned by the notorious "Roaring Giant," Emeric Belasco. Accompanying Barrett are Edith, his wife, and two psychics – Florence Tanner, a spiritualist medium, and Benjamin Franklin Fischer, a psychical one. From their very arrival in Matawaskie Valley, immersed in greenish mist, the group is unable to shun off the sensation of uncanniness. Specifically, the mist immediately implies the threatening nature of their surroundings. The valley is suffused with the stench that comes from the rotten tarn, covered with litter, and lined with slime. A curvy gravel path leads to a massive house with bricked-up windows and crumbling steps, covered with yellowish fungi. As the group approaches, Edith says: "It stood before them in the fog, a massive, looming specter of a house. – '*Hideous*,' said Florence" (57). However, in spite of its visual "hideousness," the house stands silently, revealing nothing untoward in its outward appearance, thus substantiating Vidler's statement that the sensation of uncanniness is not provoked by "special effects of design" (11). The linear logic of traditional haunted house stories presupposes the transformation of the domestic space into a haunted space, which occurs as soon as one enters the house and blocks out the sensations of the outside world. Thus, the somber, miserable structure of the house does not trigger uncanny sensations on its own, but suggests that the interior of the house holds a terrifying secret.

Upon entering the house, the group observes "hulking groups of furniture; huge, leaden colored paintings; giant tapestries filmed with dust; a staircase, broad and curving, leading upward into blackness" (Matheson 59). Still, they do not attribute the sensation of uncanniness to the house's interiority *per se*, admiring its majestic splendor instead. After her initial impression, Edith says: "Bathed with light, the great hall was another place entirely. Now its size seemed regal rather than ominous. No longer black with looming shadows, it

was a massive chamber in some art museum . . . She smiled. It didn't seem like a haunted house at all" (145). Vidler suggests that the sensation is not provoked by striking attributes such as dark, velvet drapes, carvings, stones, suits of armor, tapestries, trophies, and wooden furniture but by the absence of apparent terror that affects the unsettling unfamiliarity of the evidently familiar (17-18). Thus, although the haunted house and its aforementioned accompanying attributes are understood as emblematic of the uncanny, they are not uncanny in themselves. Ultimately, the uncanny is experienced as an intangible unease because it is borderline and exists between the binarity of absence and presence. It signifies something unknown that cannot be understood and therefore cannot be rationalized.

This "something" starts manifesting itself soon after the group enters the house. Curtis contends that, in haunted houses, "doors, windows, and other openings," and various electronic devices – such as "telephones, screens, and channels of communication – often act independently of desires," refusing to simply "stay shut or turned off" (111). Following the traditional haunted house formula, Florence states that Hell House's atmosphere is somehow amiss (Matheson 59). The front door has been left unlocked but is mysteriously locked upon entering. The generator malfunctions, leaving the group without electricity. Afterward, Florence finds a phonograph in the great hall that somehow manages to play Belasco's welcome speech. As soon as they start investigating sections of Hell House, the group notices, to paraphrase Curtis, that it is "marked by signs of negligence" and still accommodates the "possessions of its previous owners," including books, documents, records, and paintings and photographs that portray "transgressive" sexual practices (185). Curtis contends that memories allocated to objects, that is, "old things" such as "souvenirs, keepsakes, and relics," have a relevant "figurative role in the *mise en scène* of the haunted house" because the "contents" of the haunted house are engraved with "events in time" (67). Arguably, the all-engulfing eruption of these "old things" or mementos stresses, in line with Curtis, "the past's power to disrupt the present" and, perhaps, to highlight that the house cannot be transformed into something that conforms to the groups' current needs (84; 108). These "needs" remain nothing more than an unfulfilled fantasy, as the house cannot be "purified" of its original owner's content. Therefore, the house is marked as a museum of memories that are present, as Curtis argues, in the form of its original owner's belongings (67). As will be argued, these belongings also assert that the house is always already inhabited – not only by household objects that belonged to the previous owner but by the owner's non-oneiric content. Thus, the

haunted house manifests as a multilayered place that protects one's past, according to Bachelard's argument (8).

Upon suffering these uncanny sensations, the group attempts at identifying its origin. However, nothing is as it seems. An ever-increasing number of mysterious manifestations causes the group's anxiety. In other words, that which stimulates anxiogenic sensations is inconspicuously hidden in the domestic domain of the *heimlich*. Failing to name the nature of these mysterious manifestations, the anxiety of the group gradually grows in intensity – they start doubting each other and their own sanity. The domestic homely is decidedly haunted by something that is vaguely experienced and, at the same time, elusive. Accordingly, it is all the uncannier as the sensation of *unheimlich*, according to phenomenology's and human geography's systemic values, should not arise in the place of one's home. To paraphrase Wolfreys, whose postulations have proved invaluable in the previous chapter, in these instances, the increased attention given to commonplace domestic details, usually a part of the taken-for-granted equipment of every human-inhabited place, produces the sensation of sheer otherness since the chandelier, the chairs, the doors, the generator, and the phonograph no longer have a habitual, everyday function (*Memory, Materiality, Spectrality* 61-62). Specifically, the sensation of otherness is provoked through inexplicable motion, subverting one's expectations that all of the above-mentioned paraphernalia must remain immutable. The scenes – by stressing that nothing seems to be in its place or, perhaps, fulfilling its typical domestic function – depict these details as dislocated, thus consolidating their conception as something that should be entirely familiar but is apparently its very antithesis (*Memory, Materiality, Spectrality* 61).

Initially, then, it seems as if the sensation is, contrary to Vidler's claim, a property of place itself (11). However, if, according to both phenomenology's and human geography's premise, places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, then the uncanny cannot be a particular place's *a priori* property. Thus, the chapter contends that the uncanny is the experience of "spatial estrangement" (Vidler 11), provoked by the projection of the original owner's non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it until the ghostly owner is dispersed or destroyed. Once again, according to phenomenology's and human geography's premise, the projection can be defined as a deliberate inscription that initially transformed the house into an affective accumulation. Discussing E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Councilor Krespel*

(1818), Vidler is to suggest that the councilor "fabricate[d] a house that was not an evil 'double,' a willed projection of his worst passions, but that was, rather, a house that contained his inner self, whole and untroubled within" (35). Contrary to the councilor's house, Hell House is an intentional, or "willed," inscription of Belasco's "worst passions." As soon as Belasco built the house, he started organizing extravagant dinner parties and ballroom dances, playing the part of the perfect host. Then, in 1920, he started promoting debaucheries which soon led to licentiousness. He formed a club, *Les Aphrodites*, whose members would partake in aphrodisiacs until they were "libidinous" enough to commence an orgy. Such an excessive lifestyle, Fischer explains, soon consumed them in its entirety: "Dining became gluttony, drinking turned to drunkenness. Drug addiction mounted. And, as the physical spectrum of his guests was perverted, so, too, was their mental" (Matheson 104). For example, Belasco staged a public "play" during which a virgin was torn apart by a starving leopard. That same year, he invited drug-addicted doctors to experiment on both humans and animals. Afterward, Belasco introduced the "Days of Defilement," during which he would encourage his guests to conceive of the worst possible perversions to inflict on each other. Such perversions intensified in 1928, with guests delving into mutilation, murder, necrophilia, and cannibalism. With all of the events he either executed or encouraged, Belasco impregnated the house's interiority with non-oneiric experiences. The understanding that Hell House is not uncanny *a priori* comes with Barrett's explanation at the end of the novel:

> Consider the years of violently emotional, destructive . . . radiations which have impregnated its interior. Consider the veritable *storehouse* of noxious power this house became. Hell House is, in essence, a giant battery, the toxic power of which must, inevitably, be tapped by those who enter it, either intentionally or involuntarily. By you, Miss Tanner. By you, Mr. Fischer. By my wife. By myself. All of us have been victimized by these poisonous accumulations. (391)

By stating that the house is a "storehouse" and a "battery," Barret acknowledges its cumulative capacity that, as he adds, "*persists* in that environment" (391). It seems as if Barret believes that these toxic "radiations" have, so to say, poisoned the structure of the house and turned it into a diseased habitat, which in turn contaminates its inhabitants. Barret's explanation echoes Bachelard's that "The old house, for those who know how to listen, is a sort of geometry of echoes" (60). According to both, such a house resembles a container; it

has an absorbent potential in which past experiences are collected and contained, persisting indefinitely. Still, Barret sees the process of invoking its "toxic power" as a product of its inhabitants' intentional or involuntary acts. At the same time, Fischer sees the house as having a psychopathic personality, independent of its original owner. Initially, he proposes that the house possesses an autonomous agency, having enough power not only to afflict its inhabitants but to physically and/or mentally demolish them (Matheson 33). Apparently, it claims victim after victim – Florence is attacked both physically and emotionally, Edith loses all semblance of control, and Dr. Barrett is physically attacked twice by "invisible forces" that he mistakenly believes belong to the house itself. However, in my view, Hell House is not an autonomous agent of haunting but a projection of its owner's non-oneiric content, abused as an instrument for the subjugation of his subjects.

Arguably, all of the deeds Belasco either executed or encouraged during his lifetime define him as a moral monster, a highly disturbed individual "who breaks the pact to which he has subscribed and prefers his own interest to the laws governing the society to which he belongs" (Foucault 92). Specifically, he has successfully coaxed his guests into committing acts of mutilation, murder, necrophilia, and cannibalism for "his own interest" or, precisely, for pleasure. Belasco is no longer alive at the time of the group's arrival, manifesting himself as a ghost. As inferred in the chapter's introduction, there is a tendency to classify the ghost as a clichéic entity, a presence that frightens people due to its spectral body. However, Cohen asserts that the monster actively *haunts*, destroying the boundaries that demanded decided closure (ix), inviting the past into the present. Belasco is an anxiogenic antagonist because he has maintained the marker of moral monstrosity through his deliberate decision to haunt the inhabitants of Hell House.

At the same time, it seems as if the house is populated with several presences that are similar to Belasco in that they aim to antagonize the inhabitants. For example, Edith sees a drowned woman in a white gown, holding a half-formed child in her arms. Supposedly, she undergoes being undressed on the stage of Belasco's private theater and, subsequently, fed to a starving leopard in front of an audience. Finally, one of the ghosts she encounters by the end of the novel is instigated into appearing in its clichéic function of indicating the reemergence of her long-forgotten or, better said, repressed fears: "It was her father, with the slack expression of an imbecile on his face, his red-rimmed eyes regarding her with stupid glee, his

mouth agape, his tongue protruding . . . He was naked, bloated . . . Her father advanced on her, holding his enormous penis with both hands" (Matheson 463). To my mind, all of the presences are passive, purposefully projected by Belasco to play upon the inhabitants' repressed content. Contrary to Fischer's claim, it is not the house that haunts the inhabitants but Belasco, reasserting his autonomy with the oft-repeated words, "Welcome to *my* house" (71; 315; 465; emphasis added). In my view, the interrelation between the house and its original owner is not unilateral but reciprocal. Belasco, initially imbuing the house with his "worst passions" (Vidler 35), now abuses it to inflict its intruders. Namely, he is not a mere metaphor for the return of the repressed, but rather its instigator, setting into motion the slippage between the sensations of the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.

Traditionally, the home presents itself as an ideal place that signifies security, permanence, and comforting, motherly-like protection. In instances of the uncanny, the symbolic nature of the dwelling place is destroyed – deconstructed of its familiar or family-like substance. An uncanny place is a place of disintegration because it displaces the delicate present with the imperfectly tamed impulses of one's repressed past. Therefore, although Hell House functions as the antithesis of the Bachelardian dream-house, it still retains phantasmagorical or, precisely, porous traits that produce tensions and instabilities among its inhabitants. In this regard, the uncanny results in a slippage that affects the experience of estrangement that spatializes the inhabitants somewhere in-between Vidler's "waking and dreaming" (11). Arguably, such a state is characterized by both temporal and spatial disruption, setting into motion the sensation of feeling lost and unable to reenter reality. These sensations have a negative side effect on one's perception, often altering the significance of once-familiar spaces. Ultimately, the uncanny leaves the inhabitants in a state of liminal suspension, susceptible to being haunted. In *Hell House*, haunting is definable as the deliberate instigation of imperfectly buried instinctual impulses that have been manipulated into returning and, accordingly, reclaiming the house's subordinate subjects. To further investigate the type of instinctual impulses Belasco instigates through haunting, it is necessary to refer to Freud's theory of repression.

Freud highlights how individuals must "sublimate," or redirect, their instinctual impulses to "higher" asexual aims to successfully "enter" human society. He positions these impulses as perversions, "sexual activities which either (a) extend, in an anatomical sense,

beyond the regions of the body that are designed for sexual union, or (b) linger over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be traversed rapidly on the path toward the final sexual aim" ("Three Essays" 1477). Accordingly, these sexual activities divert the individual from following a "normal" path of copulation, either by extending pleasure beyond geniality or by creating new sexual aims as a result of "abnormal" lingering. Freud refers to the former perversions as "deviations in respect of the sexual object" ("Three Essays" 1465) and to the latter ones as "deviations in the form of the sexual aim" ("Three Essays" 1467). The former ones include male homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, and necrophilia, and the latter ones include fetishism, sadism, masochism. Moreover, they are regularly referred to as "inversions" (Ibid.) because they displace the sexual object to an individual who is not a member of the opposite sex or to an inanimate object. Most importantly, the repression of instinctual impulses is "unstable" because sexual impulses are imperfectly tamed" (*Introductory Lectures* 48). Therefore, repression is always already temporal as instincts preserve their impetus to penetrate consciousness, "either the instinct has kept its strength, or it will regain it, or it is reawakened by a new situation" (*Moses and Monotheism* 153). Before Barrett's *séance*, Edith must examine Florence as a standard precaution against fraudulency. Edith is startled when Florence starts to undress. This "new situation," or, seeing another woman's naked body for the first time, induces her repressed instinctual impulses to slowly regain strength. At first, she takes pleasure in touching the medium's silky hair. Then, she is startled by the fullness of her breasts and tights, and the swell of her stomach. Upon looking between her legs, Edith realizes that: "She couldn't take her eyes away. She felt a drawing hotness in her stomach" (Matheson 150).

Soon after the examination, Edith encounters a book in Belasco's bedroom library. Among all of the photographs hidden in it, she stumbles upon one of two women in an explicit sexual embrace. Freud states that, initially, the Id demands the satisfaction of an instinct that the Ego eventually recognizes as sexual and/or aggressive. It forgoes its "satisfaction either because it is paralyzed by the magnitude of the demand" or because it interprets it as threatening to the individual (*Moses and Monotheism* 183; 200). At first, Edith's Ego recognizes the danger of possible deviation in relation to the inversion of the sexual object, that is, homosexuality: "She fought it off . . . I am a good girl" (Matheson 295). And, although her impulses have regained strength, she represses them until they "reawaken", once again, after her second encounter with the photographs: "She licked her upper lip

unconsciously. She stared at a photograph of the two women lying on the great hall table . . . The room seemed to get hotter and hotter" (295). Curtis argues that photographs of original owners operate as indicators hinting that the house is still occupied by other presences – precisely, these "photographs stand as warnings that any incoherence in the narratives of new owners may cause them to become possessed by exposing vulnerabilities that spirits can exploit" (Curtis 124). By planting the photographs, Belasco steadily undoes Edith's sublimation, stimulating the reemergence of her hidden instinctual impulses. Moreover, it comes as no surprise that said sublimation occurs in Belasco's bedroom. As Bachelard argues, "the bedchamber bear[s] the mark of an unforgettable intimacy" (24). Belasco's bedroom is, at the same time, internal, an intimate haven hiding Florence's transgressions from the outside world, and external – it is a place where Edith's unsuccessfully sublimated unconscious content is uncovered.

Finally, Belasco possesses Florence, exploiting her into seducing and, subsequently, inducing Edith's "imperfectly tamed" (*Introductory Lectures* 48) impulses to permanently penetrate her consciousness. Besides inducing the reemergence of repressed impulses with respect to the inversion of the sexual object, Belasco also abuses Edith's less apparent "perversions." In "Freud and Sexual Ethics" (1987), David Carr clarifies how Freud does not perceive "perverse" sexuality only in terms of "irregular non-heterosexual activity" (364). Accordingly, the inability to transition to "a post-pubertal stage of sexual maturity" at which one can "relate their erotic desire to other human sentiments" is indicative of "immature regression to an infantile stage of auto-erotic sensuality" during the three stages of sexual development (364; 366).[50] Accordingly, Edith's heterosexual impulses mirror the earliest autoerotic impulses of children because they are directed exclusively toward self-satisfaction and are far from converging the affectionate and the sensual current that, in Freud's understanding, underlines normal sexuality (Carr 364). These impulses are also deliberately (re)instigated by Belasco during his possession of her. For example, shortly after their arrival at Hell House, Belasco manipulates Edith into seducing Fisher, who turns her down. During

[50] According to Freud's theory of psychosexual development, human beings possess an instinctual libido from infancy. The libido develops in five psychosexual stages – the oral, the anal, the phallic, the latent, and the genital. The ending of the first three stages marks the arrival of puberty when the sexual instinct "normalizes," that is, it is no longer auto-erotic but is replaced with a sexual object (*Three Essays* 127).

the second seduction, Edith is far more assertive: “A look of furious derision on her face. ‘What’s the *matter*, little man?’ she ranted. ‘Never had a tit before?’” (Matheson 300). Edith also engages in aggressive intercourse with her husband in the steam room: “The pain was so severe, his vision started blurring. He could hardly breathe, his lungs struggling with the scalding air” (267). Both Barrett and Edith initially believe her behavior to have been induced by the house itself.

However, during the second seduction, Edith acknowledges the existence of those repressed impulses which the Ego has been trying to forgo because of their excessiveness and/or aggression (*Moses and Monotheism* 200). Edith screams that “the house is doing nothing… I am doing it (Matheson 299), thus substantiating the statement that the haunted house does not possess a psychopathic personality, independently inflicting its inhabitants. Such an analysis adheres to Curtis’s argument according to which the inhabitants who experience and/or encounter “spirits from the past” are often in a fragile “emotional or financial situations, and although the nature of the haunting is often physically present, there is also a level of ambivalence” as there is always the issue of how much “the intruder into the new milieu brings the haunting with them” (170). Although *Hell House* presents such a physical haunting, it is undeniable that both Edith and Florence bring their own ghosts with them. In other words, we only ever witness the gradual unfolding of both Edith’s and Florence’s repressed content, which has been, up until Belasco’s intervention, unsuccessfully suppressed in their unconscious.

As mentioned, Florence is a spiritualist medium. However, she is also the Reverend of The Temple of Spiritual Harmony and, as such, is celibate. Not surprisingly, Belasco instigates her instinctual impulses soon after she arrives at Hell House. Unlike Edith’s, Florence’s impulses are not “perverse” in that they do not converge affection and sensuality but in that they invert the sexual object to “something” else. Upon arriving, Florence wants to heal Hell House by absolving the presences that apparently populate it. One such presence is Belasco’s son Daniel whom she wants to release. At first, she exhumes his mummified body which was immured behind the wall of the wine cellar. After she consecrates his body behind the house, Florence believes him to be released. That same night Daniel reappears, demanding a different kind of release. Namely, knowing that she is celibate, Belasco incites her to have intercourse with Daniel. At first, he presents Daniel as an imprisoned victim of Hell House.

He infiltrates her dreams, manipulating her into believing that Daniel loves her. Not unlike Edith, Florence's Ego initially renounces the satisfaction of her instinctual impulses, recognizing its danger. However, after Daniel supposedly saves her from drowning in the tar, she submits to him. Belasco successfully undoes Florence's sublimation, stimulating her instinctual impulses to consciousness. Florence then tells Fischer that she is possessed by Belasco, who is manipulating her into seducing Edith. However, Barrett believes that Florence is not possessed by anyone but by her "repressed self" (403). He suggests that they have witnessed a "part of Miss Tanner's personality she'd always kept hidden, even from herself . . . her chasteness [turning] into wanton sexuality" (Ibid.). Florence eventually admits to her fantasy of engaging in *ménage à trois* with Daniel and Edith. The admittance marks the moment when Belasco's instigated impulses have successfully sublimated past Florence's Ego, reacquainting her with her repressed self.

Finally, drawing from Vidler's aforementioned argument, the haunted house functions as its original owner's "double," that is, "a willed projection of . . . worst passion[s]" (35). All of the acts that occurred in Hell House refer to the inseparability of these spectral presences and the places they inhabit. Precisely, Belasco is clearly dependent on the house, having no existence outside of the house. After Fischer confronts him in the chapel and exhumes his body from the basement, the house resumes its passive presence – its atmosphere becomes bland (Matheson 492). With the house dying, Fischer finally states "Belasco. Alone . . . He created everything" (486). Therefore, regardless of its name, Hell House is not inherently monstrous as it initially appears to be. Primarily, it does not portray any of the propensities that could be understood as uncanny *per se*, let alone monstrous. Secondly, the seemingly autonomous attacks were not instigated by the house itself but by Belasco who, as Fischer finally realizes, exploited it as an instrument to endanger them (485). Not once does Hell House act independently of its original owner.

In this respect, Hell House proves to be merely a passive setting and not a site that triggers uncanny sensations on its own. Because the house stops illustrating sentient inclinations as soon as its original owner is destroyed, it can be argued that the two are always already co-dependent. Put simply, Belasco does not exist without the house, nor the house without him. Finally, the relationship between the house and Belasco is reciprocal. In other words, after initially affecting the house, Belasco now manipulates it into afflicting its

inhabitants by instigating the return of their repressed instinctual impulses. The uncanny is thus not "situated" in a specific space, nor an *a priori* sensation. It is the experience of spatial estrangement (Vidler 11), purposely projected onto the structure of the house, that sets into motion the feeling of otherness within the frame of the once familiar. As soon as the uncanny manifests, the preconceived conception of the symbolic home is subverted. Something that should, in principle, signify safety, reassurance, and domestic-like intimacy, is destroyed. In this regard, the house is not presented as a refuge from the threatening outside world but employed by Belasco as an environment in which its inhabitants' imperfectly tamed instinctual impulses are exposed.

3.2.Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018)

Analogously to the previously analyzed case study, the subchapter will open up with the discussion on Hill House's outward appearance to argue that it is not uncanny in itself, although it exhibits some of its emblematic attributes. Drawing from Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and Bachelard's phenomenology of dwelling, it will delineate three types of presences that populate the haunted house, either permanently or provisionally, as projections of guilt, projections of its inhabitants' unresolved traumas, and mere residues of memory. After arguing that these presences are not autonomous agents of haunting, it will ascertain whether Hill House is. Such an argument would counter Anthony Vidler's claim that the house operates as a projection of one's both conscious and unconscious content (11), and confirm Gaston Bachelard's implication of it having a psyche of its own (46). Subsequently, the subchapter will present Poppy Hill as the fourth and final type of presence that populates the house. Precisely, in accordance with Michel Foucault's premise, Poppy will be defined as the moral monster *par excellence* that deliberately decides to haunt the inhabitants of Hill House, destroying the boundaries between the repressed past and the present, irrevocably interconnecting them. Specifically, the subchapter will argue that the sensation of uncanniness is not the house's *a priori* property but that it is provoked by Poppy, who, by abusing the house as an instrument of instigating visions, affects the slippage from the place of the supposedly familiar to the space of the disturbingly unfamiliar. Finally, the subchapter will conclude by considering whether the malignant, monstrous propensities perceived by the protagonists are due to the inscription of non-oneiric content by the original owner, or

whether the house itself acts as the fiendishly inhuman force bent on ill-treating the inhabitants.

Mike Flanagan's television series, *The Haunting of Hill House*, follows the lives of the Crain family as they move into the series' eponymous structure, situated somewhere in Massachusetts. Hugh, Olivia, and their five children – Steven, Shirley, Theodora, Luke, and Nell – wish to renovate the mansion to sell it and build their "forever house." However, the renovation is delayed due to unforeseen difficulties, and the family has to prolong their stay beyond August. The series alternates between two timelines – while the first one is set in 1992, depicting the events that led to Olivia's suicide and the family fleeing from the house, the second one is set two decades later, following the lives of the Crain children into adulthood. Steven, the oldest, is an acclaimed author, famous for writing about his family's experience of living in Hill House. His sister, Shirley, is a mortician who accuses Steven of exploiting their traumatic experiences for profit. Theodora, a child-psychiatrist living in Shirley's guest house, is hyper "sensitive," similarly to her mother. She wears gloves to protect herself from touching other people and thus experiencing their emotions. Luke and Nell are, by far, the most "damaged" ones – while the former is a relapsing drug addict, the latter becomes fixated on Hill House after her husband's sudden death and the supposed return of her childhood nightmare, "The Bent-Neck Lady." Although scattered throughout the United States, the Crains share something that binds them together. Fundamental to the formation of their adult selves is, as Steven emphasizes, the experience of having lived in a haunted house.

The spectators first see Hill House at the time of the family's escape during the 1992 timeline. The somber house stands silently, submerged in darkness. The mist saturates the scene, suggesting the sensation of uncanniness. As the camera closes in on the house, Steven says: "No live organism can continue to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality. Even larks and katydids are supposed by some to dream. Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills holding darkness within" ("Steven Sees a Ghost" 00:00:13-00:00:32). In *Haunted by a House*, Schmitz touches upon the three-sentence paragraph from Jackson's novel, which, as noted in the chapter's introduction, features some of the most familiar haunted house conventions. Since the establishing shot of the series contains the same sentence, I would like to draw on Schmitz's brief discussion on Hill House's ontology (25-

26). In other words, the opening sentence of the series is important in that it provides two potential approaches to analyzing the house's complicated ontological conundrum – as a living, breathing organism and "just" a house (Schmitz 46). As Schmitz states, it can imply that the house is, like the larks and katydids Steven mentions, a living entity that has existed for far "too long under conditions of absolute reality" and has "consequently gone insane" (25). Such an approach positively subverts Hill House's portrayal as a simple setting suggesting, as Schmitz argues, that the Crains must conquer the house itself because it manifests malign awareness and has the agency to autonomously cause corruption and crime (Ibid.). However, the alternative approach proposes that the house is nothing more than an inanimate building and that, as such, it falls outside of the anthropomorphic spectrum of "sanity" and "insanity" (Ibid.). Following the second formulation, the subchapter aims at subverting the idea that Hill House is inherently malign, arguing instead that it does not autonomously and consciously haunt its inhabitants. Accordingly, it also aims at arguing that the uncanny is not the effect of the house's exteriority. As Stephen states, the house stands silently, revealing nothing untoward in its outward appearance, thus substantiating Vidler's statement that the sensation of uncanniness is not stimulated by special effects of design (11). In line with the linear storyline of stereotypical haunted house stories that stress the transformation from the homely to the haunted domestic space, the house's structure hints that its interiority conceals a terrifying secret. This secret is the "darkness within" Stephen hints at in the opening sentence, which is eventually exposed by the Crains.

In the second episode, "Open Casket," Shirley is taking a photograph of Mr. Dudley, the house's caretaker, and her father. Curtis claims that haunted houses are initially represented in the "daylight of rational decision-making" (179). This is particularly important in that the establishing shot of Hill House clearly confirms the initial statement according to which the sensation of uncanniness is not provoked by particular architectural patterns (Vidler 11). The shot highlights that the house is not a slowly decaying structure, dark, cold, damp, full of debris, or engulfed by fast-growing ivy vines with shadows popping out of its shattered windows. It is a magnificent mansion, well-kept and colored in subdued hues of brown, gray, and yellow. Therefore, the structure itself is not characterized as otherworldly, or as contaminated by spectral presences. Initially, its interior is similarly unremarkable. As Steven states, "Within, walls stood upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut" ("Steven Sees a Ghost" 00:00:42-00:00:50). When the family first moves in,

the children are excited to live in a "castle." They hurry to explore it, fighting over the bedrooms. All of the visually striking details Vidler discusses, such as the spiraling staircase leading to the second floor, the marble statues, the tapestries, and the carved furniture of archetypal haunted houses (17-18), do not set into motion the sensation of uncanniness. Much like in Matheson's *Hell House*, the domestic homely is decidedly haunted by something that is experienced and, at the same time, elusive. As the series soon reveals, this "something" foreshadows an eerie encounter in the near future. To Theodora, the house is permeated with an insufferable smell. Luke does not like to be inside it because it is "bad," and Nell, his twin, implies that it is insufferably loud.

The siblings' comments solidify their conception of the domestic dwelling as something that should be completely familiar but is its antithesis. A distinct feeling of disapproval occurs. Something strange and inexplicably disturbing is detected in the house – the smell, the sounds, and the strange atmosphere. Curtis claims that "the invocation of the child in haunted house films is not surprising because children have the most intense relationships" with domestic spaces (205). Thus, the Crain children further highlight how the formerly construed perception of the house and the accompanying pleasure of intimate familiarity is, all of a sudden, overridden. To paraphrase Curtis, Hill House is "implicated with humanity," cluttered with meanings and memories from the past, and yet, it is not human-inclined, steadily revealing itself as the antithesis of the Bachelardian "dream house" (9; 10). The tension that arises from this anomaly activates acute anxieties among the siblings who, soon after, start seeing presences that populate the haunted house, and that, in turn, set into motion a sudden, shocking realization that their initial perception of Hill House as a safe haven has been destroyed. In these instances, the fragile sense of belonging is superseded by the experience of being emotionally estranged from the house that was supposed to keep them safe from the threatening outside world. The Crain family is forced to see that the Bachelardian dream house that he highlights as a "space for cheer and intimacy, [a] space that is supposed to condense and defend intimacy" (48) is, as Curtis claims, nothing more than a never-ending nightmare (194).

Subsequently, the subchapter contends that the presences that populate Hill House are either projections of guilt, projections of the inhabitants' unresolved traumas, or residues of memory. In the first episode of the series, Steven explains how: "[He has] seen a lot of ghosts.

Just not the way you think. A ghost can be a lot of things. A memory, a daydream, a secret. Grief, anger, guilt" ("Steven Sees a Ghost" 00:41:47-00:42:00). Shirley sees the ghost of a well-suited man toasting her throughout the series. The final episode, "Witness Marks," explains that the ghost is not an autonomous agent of haunting but the projection of her irreconcilable guilt. Once she confesses to her husband that she cheated on him while at a mortician's conference, the ghost disappears. However, Hill House's ghostly presences are also recollections of trauma, purposefully provoking the trauma's return. To analyze the second type, it is important to address Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma.[51] In *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), Caruth discusses how traumatic experiences cannot be integrated into the greater chain of schematic knowledge because of an initial lack of apprehension. The splinter, which enters the flesh unseen, is only observed *post factum*: "The shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the missing of this experience, the fact that not being experienced in time, it has not yet been fully known" (*Unclaimed Experience* 62). While Freud argues that the uncanny arises in response to the realization that a repressed experience has returned ("The Uncanny" 152), Caruth's trauma theory is constituted by the missing of experience that underlines its unknowable nature. *Hill House* introduces the Crain children as they experience the trauma *per excellence* – the mysterious death of their mother. Since Olivia's death defies comprehension, the children cannot transform the trauma into, in Caruth's words, "a narrative memory" that would allow it to be "verbalized" and clearly "communicated" with others and, afterward, consciously comprehended (*Unclaimed Experience* 153). In this regard, the trauma cannot be precisely recalled, despite the children's excruciating efforts to name it. The inability to confront the trauma leaves them permanently marked and, as Caruth contends, incurable (Ibid.). To detach herself from the trauma, Shirley becomes a mortician, processing death by visually "fixing" the deceased ones into their former selves. Theodora, on the other hand, uses her "sensitivity" to successfully treat children. But because Theodora can sense one's sentiments, she distances herself from people both physically, by wearing gloves, and emotionally. Luke is a relapsing drug addict, going in and out of rehab centers. Nell develops sleep paralysis in the wake of her

[51] In her article, "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics" (2007), Susannah Radstone attributes "the current 'popularity' of trauma research in the Humanities" to the publication of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992), and Cathy Caruth's edited collection *Trauma: Explorations of Memory* (1995) (9).

trauma. Luke is, during his relapses, haunted by the "Tall Man" while Nell is haunted by the "Bent-Neck Lady."

Although Nell's husband dies of an aneurysm, she assumes that the "Lady" murdered him. In episode five, "Open Casket," she decides to revisit Hill House to confront the trauma. Namely, Nell is prompted by her psychiatrist who states that Hill House is nothing more than a simple structure consisting of bricks, blocks, and glass and, as such, cannot have power over people: "I think that if you were to look at it today after all these years, empty in the woods, you'd find it's not a monster. It's barely even a house. It's a carcass . . . It's just a building. Probably littered with... with graffiti and dirt ("The Bent-Neck Lady" 00:40:33-00:40:55). The psychiatrist's explanation is important in that it emphasizes, early on in the series, that the house has never sentiently haunted its inhabitants, thus negating the Bachelardian notion of it as possessing an independent psyche. As will be discussed, despite the fact that the house is inimical to different forms of domestication and familiarization, it is not a conscious and active agent. Although it is initially tempting to portray it as a predatory monster that perplexes the boundaries between the animate and the built, Hill House has never been this fiendishly inhuman force bent on ill-treating the inhabitants. As will be argued – it has only ever housed one such offender.

Upon entering, Nell encounters the apparitions of her family. While Luke and Steve are playing hide-and-seek, Shirley takes her to see their mother. Theodora apologizes for their last argument, admitting that she should never have doubted her. Nell then remarries Arthur and, at the pinnacle of her fantasy, dances throughout Hill House. Instead of her wedding night, she is to have a tea party with her mother, Luke, and Anabelle. They climb to the top of the house's spiraling staircase. Before entering the Red Room, Olivia tells Nell that everything is going to be okay. However, Nell does not believe her; instead, she hangs herself. However, the scene does not end with her hanged body but continues to show how she is dropping down through Hill House. At the end of the scene, she sees herself in her own bed in Hill House. Suddenly, she realizes that she is "The Bent-Neck Lady" who has been haunting herself all those years. Drawing on Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Caruth suggests that "the painful repetition of the flashback can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way" (*Unclaimed Experience* 59). Furthermore, she states that "the history of the

traumatized individual" is essentially a "repetition of the event of destruction" (63) or, as Freud calls it, repetition compulsion (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 63). The insistent self-haunting Nell relives illustrates her inability to, as Caruth contends, deal with the trauma of her mother's premature death. Since she cannot integrate it into understanding, it can only ever return in the form of the self-projected "The Bent-Neck Lady." Thus, the only way to avoid being possessed by the trauma is to take her own life. Nell returns to non-existence, gratifying her death-instinct or, in Freud's definition, her endeavor to "re-establish a state of things that was disturbed by the emergence of life" ("Ego and the Id" 40).

After Nell's suicide, the surviving siblings are similarly haunted by her. In episode eight, "Witness Marks," Theodora and Shirley are driving toward Hill House to join Steven and their father in an attempt to save Luke. Nell's piercing scream interrupts the sisters' argument. Nell's suicide, not unlike Olivia's, defies comprehension. While Steven believes that Nell was mentally ill, Luke blames the house for her death. Therefore, the siblings cannot transform the trauma into a narrative memory to, subsequently, integrate it into understanding. Until the series finale, when the Crain siblings begin to reconcile with their past, both Nell's and Olivia's ghostly appearances outside of the house function, in Caruth's words, as images evoking the return of traumatic experience (*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 153). In particular, Olivia appears to the children every so often. During Nell's funeral, she tries to pull Luke inside her grave, and, later on, she appears to Theodora and Hugh in Shirley's office, crawling on the floor. Similarly, the image of "The Tall Man" reappears throughout Luke's drug-addled life and, as Caruth argues, represents "the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits" (*Unclaimed Experience* 59). The said event relates to episode four, "The Twin Thing," which introduces "The Tall Man."

In the episode, Olivia finds a bowler hat that Luke claims as his own. That same night, Luke wakes to a thudding sound. He ventures into the corridor where he first sees the floating "Man." Paralyzed with fear, Luke steals back into his bedroom to hide under the bed. The "Tall Man" enters his bedroom, finds his bowler hat, and prepares to leave only to seek Luke out when he lets out a breath of relief. As he bends down, Luke lets out a piercing scream. The "Tall Man" is the projection of Luke's trauma when he appears *outside* of Hill House, as in episode four, "The Twin Thing," during his escape from the rehab center. However, he also appears autonomously *within* the house. Episode seven, "Eulogy," explains that "The Tall

Man" is the former owner of Hill House – William Hill. When he was just a child, William's parents sent him to a mental asylum. There he met and, afterward, married Poppy. Shortly after, they took up residence in the house and had two children. However, William started cheating on Poppy with a housemaid, driving himself even more insane from the guilt of his act. As a result, he willingly bricked himself up in the basement.

Besides William, there are additional presences that appear autonomously. In episode four, "The Twin Thing," Nell and Luke hear an old woman's voice through one of the bedroom's phonographs. During the storm in episode six, "Two Storms," Olivia sees that same woman, confined to her bed. Also, she opens one of the bedroom doors to a little boy in a wheelchair. According to phenomenology's and human geography's premise, places are affective accumulations of one's either oneiric or, in my analysis, non-oneiric experience. In the context of the haunted house, these experiences do not dissolve with the original owner's passing. Equivalently to experiences, houses are also inhabited by individual memories that are produced and, afterward, inscribed during the process of dwelling. Curtis argues, "All houses are haunted – by memories, by the history of their sites, by their owners' fantasies and projections or by the significance they acquire for agents or strangers" (34). Thus, the third type of presences populating Hill House are, in my reading, residual memories of the previous experiences of place, that is, patterns of life, that imbue the synthetic skin of the house, and that have been awakened by the Crains' arrival. Independent of the present inhabitants, these spectral memories set uncanny sensations into motion. They are anxiogenic in that they often appear on boundaries of screen space, instigating the visible versus invisible opposition in relation to one's orientation in a particular place that is, at least according to Jentsch, essential to one's experience of the uncanny (qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 125). There are around thirty-three half-glimpsed specters scattered throughout the house – hiding in the darkness, observing from hidden spots in the house, staring from behind cupboards, door arches, windows, lurking beneath trap doors, etc. Yet, despite successfully instigating uncanny sensations, they only ever remain residues, not achieving the agency to autonomously haunt the Crains.

Could Hill House be an autonomous agent of haunting, thus contradicting Vidler's postulation of it being the mental projection of its inhabitants and affirming Bachelard's implication of it as having a psychology of its own? Certainly, the Crains' initial impression

of Hill House partly conforms with Bachelard's conceptualization because they personify it as alive and breathing. For example, Olivia explains, "You know, a house is like a person's body. The walls are like bones… The pipes are veins, it needs to breathe, it needs light and flow" ("Open Casket" 00:04:54-00:05:04). At the same time, it differs from Bachelard's in that the Crains do not perceive the house as having virtues of protection and preservation. Besides, Hugh repeatedly warns how the house refuses to be repaired. From Hugh's description, it can be discerned that the house complains, in a violently clamorous way, at the slightest struggle to put it to its predetermined, domestic use. The house, in Hugh's opinion, transforms from a positive to a negative or an "anti" or "adverse" space, subverting its traditional role of sustaining their safety. The spectators are also relentlessly reminded of its allegedly tyrannical attributes that threaten the family: "Our family is like an unfinished meal to that house. The house is the most dangerous place in the world" ("Witness Marks" 00:29:36-00:29:48). For this reason, Hugh blames both Nell's and Olivia's suicide on it.

After she appears as a presence at the end of season one, Nell also alerts her siblings of the house's sentience, saying "I am like a small creature swallowed whole by a monster. And the monster feels my tiny movements inside" ("Silence Lay Steadily" 00:40:29-00:40:37). A particularly disturbing part of Nell's description is the depiction of Hill House as having a tendency toward devouring and digesting its inhabitants. In both Hugh's and Nell's descriptions, the house transforms into an anthropomorphic agent of their imminent annihilation or, perhaps, into an insatiable consumer cannily ingesting its helpless inhabitants. Nonetheless, the horrid nature of the house is thoroughly highlighted. In such morbid instances, the inhabitants are nothing more than simple food. In other words, far from being the purpose of Hill House's existence as per phenomenology's and human geography's postulation, its inhabitants become merely the means to satisfy its monstrous hunger. Similarly, many critics of the series perceive the house as a living entity (Schonter, "Ending Explained") with a monstrous inclination toward feeding on its inhabitants' vulnerabilities with the aim of digesting them (Schwartz, "Hell is Other People"). Conversely, Delanhunty-Light aims at contradicting its inherent monstrosity by considering several stories that one of the series' screenwriters published after the director, Mike Flanagan, explained how there was not enough screen-time to portray the house's history. The stories recount how the house was built by Jacob Hill, Hazel Hill's father, who "committed suicide by throwing himself off its roof during the Great Depression" of the 1930s ("*Hill House* Explained"). Furthermore, they

also recount the bitter feud between Hazel and Poppy who was the wife of Hazel's brother William. The conflict intensified to the extent that "the inhabitants of the nearby village thought they murdered each other's children" (Ibid.). After William's suicide, the two women were left in the house, growing old and, eventually, dying together. Jacob's and William's suicide, the possible murder of the Hill children, and the ever-intensifying hatred between the women ultimately created the evil that infested the house (Ibid.). Accordingly, Delanhunty-Light's assertion differs from Schonter's and Schwartz's in that it acknowledges Hill House as an affective accumulation invested by its inhabitants, and not as an autonomous agent of haunting. To substantiate the statement on an example from the series, one should look no further than Steven's frequently cited comment that attributes Nell's and Olivia's suicide to mental illness:

> Our family has a disease that's never been treated because it was easier to listen to your crazy stories about an evil house . . . Nell was delusional, depressed, Luke is an addict, Shirley is a control freak, and Theo is basically a clenched fist with hair. The whole fucking family is on the brink of a breakdown and seeing things that aren't there, hearing things that aren't there, and that shit happened after the house . . . There is something wrong with our goddamn brains. ("Witness Marks" 00:24:39-00:25:20)

Clearly, Steven's comment stresses that he does not see Hill House as a malignantly evil monster, having the autonomous agency to endanger uncanny effects and to unexpectedly turn on its inhabitants. Bachelard writes that, whenever humans find the slightest of shelters, "we shall see the imagination build 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection or –, just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls, mistrust the staunchest ramparts" (5). In line with Bachelard's argument, Hill House becomes anxiogenic as soon as its troubled inhabitants start projecting their sensitive "imagination" onto its structure. Thus, it is important to take into consideration that the majority of the Crain family are already susceptible to being haunted. Such an analysis adheres to Curtis's argument according to which the inhabitants who experience or encounter past presences are often in a delicate "emotional or financial situations, and although the nature of the haunting is often very physically present, there is also a level of ambivalence" as there is always the question of how much "the intruder into the new milieu brings the haunting with them" (170). Therefore, Nell's suicide, according to Caruth's reading of Freud's death drive, is the result of her failure

to fend off the trauma of Olivia's suicide. This is further highlighted in Steven's conversation with Hugh,

> She said the Bent-Neck Lady was back. – There it is. Mental illness. – No, no, Steve… – Clear as a day . . . Hereditary. You let her believe all that bullshit . . . All that bullshit about Hill House and this is the inevitable conclusion . . . So, you hear her spout some of the crazy stuff . . . she said when she was six, and you don't think that maybe you should get her some help? . . . Just like Mom, you ignore the signs... ("Two Storms" 00:32:40-00:33:12)

It can be argued that contrary to Hugh's claim, Hill House was not directly responsible for Nell's nor Olivia's downfall. In episode nine, "Screaming Meemies," Olivia opens up to Mrs. Dudley about her father's death during childhood. Because his death defied comprehension, Olivia could not transform the trauma into, in Caruth's words, a narrative memory to be communicated and confronted (*Unclaimed Experience* 153). The trauma remains unconfronted and, thus, unintegrated into understanding. In line with Caruth's theory, Olivia is unable to recover (Ibid.). After the conversation with Mrs. Dudley, Olivia walked from one of the house's rooms into Shirley's morgue, where a grown Nell was lying on one of the silver slabs. She also saw Luke's overdosed corpse. That same night, Olivia overheard the twins talking about bad dreams. Nell spoke of lying on a silver table, with her jaw wired shut, while Luke his overdosed body lying on the floor. They both blamed her for their death: "And it was you that killed us, because you sent us out there, in the night, in the dark" ("Screaming Meemies" 00:24:55-00:25:03). Only, it was not the twins playing tricks on Olivia's mind but Poppy Hill.

As inferred in the introduction, there is a tendency to initially classify Poppy as a clichéic presence. However, in my view, all of the deeds Hill either executed during her lifetime or encouraged afterward, define her as a moral monster. Analogously to the beforementioned Belasco, Poppy is a monstrously malignant individual, an antagonist that threatens to annihilate the inhabitants. During their first encounter in episode nine, Olivia follows Poppy into the reading room to listen to her enigmatic experience at Hill House. Although implied, it is never revealed what really took place with Poppy's children – whether they died of natural causes or whether she murdered them. Still, accounting for the fact that the Hills met in a mental asylum, it is highly probable that Poppy murdered them to, as she

says, “protect” them: “You try and try to keep them safe . . . But it’s hard, isn’t it? And you can’t keep them safe forever” (“Screaming Meemies” 00:16:46-00:16:57). Although Poppy’s speech is playfully seductive, it does not disguise her intent. As the two women stand over Olivia’s sleeping twins in their bedroom, Poppy murmurs: “And I’d bet you’d do anything for them . . . So, what if they was [sic] having a dream? I mean, bad ones. I mean posi-lutely screamin’ meemies. A dream about sick and sad and disease and rot and loss and darkness” (“Screaming Meemies” 00:19:54-00:20:32). She would wake them, Olivia insists. Poppy then reveals the secret of protecting them from such dreams. At the same time, the signs of Olivia’s mental instability are increasing. Suffering constant visions, Olivia admits to being “scattered” and not feeling herself. She soon reveals the source of her anxiety to Mrs. Dudley, stating that she is terrified by the idea that her children will venture into the outside world, alone and unprotected. The only way to save her little ones, she decides, is to kill them. In the dead of night, Olivia wakes up Nell, Luke, and his friend Abigail who is, in fact, the daughter of the Dudleys who are the caretakers of Hill House, and not just a figment of his imagination. She takes them to the “Red Room” for a tea party with the intention of “waking” them up. She offers them rat-poison, but Hugh arrives before his children can drink it and saves them from dying. However, having tasted the poison, Abigail dies. Afterward, Poppy reappears, warning Olivia that Hugh intends to kill the children: “He’s driving them into the dark. He’s killing them. He’s killing all of them. . . He’s driving them toward disease and heartbreak and sadness and death” (“Screaming Meemies” 00:49:35-00:49:46). The only way to wake up from this “screaming meemie,” Poppy suggests, is to commit suicide. Olivia then plunges herself from the top of the spiral staircase, cracking her skull open.

Cohen claims, “The monster haunts; it does not simply bring past and present together but destroys the boundary that demanded their twinned foreclosure” (ix-x). Not unlike Matheson’s Belasco then, Poppy deliberately decides to haunt the inhabitants of Hill House, destroying the boundaries between the repressed past and the present. However, unlike Belasco, she does not instigate the inhabitants’ repressed instinctual impulses but their traumas that have, according to Caruth’s explanation, evaded understanding in the past and thus remained unresolved in the present. Additionally, according to Vidler’s argument, the uncanny is not understood as an *a priori* property of a particular place. In my interpretation, it is the experience of “spatial estrangement” (Vidler 11) provoked by the projection of the owner’s non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it until the owner is destroyed or

dispersed. By its existence, to paraphrase Vidler's postulation, as a mental projection of its original owner's non-oneiric inscription, the house has become unfamiliar and thus uninhabitable, spatializing its inhabitants somewhere in-between waking and dreaming (Ibid.). This is apparent in the many aforementioned scenes that show both Olivia and Nell being lost in a state of liminality, partially relieving and partially perverting past experiences. Ultimately, the uncanny manifests itself at the moment in which Nell's and Olivia's traumatic anxiety appears or, precisely, is instigated into returning, thus deforming their perception of place and subverting the familiar with the feeling of radical unfamiliarity. It also marks the moment of a distressing change in Nell's and Olivia's relationship with Hill House, their transformation into outsiders within the once-secure setting.

Specifically, such a shift prompts Nell's and Olivia's perception of Hill House as a malignant monster, directed at their destruction. The disintegration of domesticity is stimulated through ghostly survival, and the slippage from the place of the supposedly familiar to that of the unfamiliar is engendered by none other than Poppy herself. Analyzing E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Councilor Krespel* (1818), Vidler is to suggest that the councilor "fabricate[d] a house that was not an evil 'double,' a willed projection of his worst passions, but that was, rather, a house that contained his inner self, whole and untroubled within" (35). Much like Matheson's Hell House, Hill House is an intentional or, in Vidler's words, "willed," inscription of Poppy's worst passions. Vidler's implication is particularly interesting if one observes that the house's original owner was, most probably, psychotic. While discussing Hill House's strange spatial demarcations, Olivia says that it is schizophrenic ("Eulogy"). Since its labyrinth-like structure constantly changes, it is impossible to accurately map it. Such "spatial estrangement" (Vidler 11) is also apparent in the performative ambiguity of some of Hill House's sections – the Red Room alters or, precisely, is altered by Poppy into a reading room for Olivia, a game room for Steven, a dance room for Theodora, and a treehouse for Luke. Clearly, Poppy plays with the "schizophrenic" coordinates of the house and the significance of said sections to underline the unwelcoming feeling of its interiority and to affirm the family's inability to fully master its topography.

In conclusion, Poppy uses Hill House as an instrument of instigating visions during Olivia's stay and after Nell's return to the house. More precisely, through these visions, Poppy affects the acutely experienced, eerie ambiguity of the once familiar, leaving both

Olivia and Nell susceptible to being seduced into committing murder and, subsequently, suicide. Through her agency, Hill House also mirrors Olivia's descent into mental illness. To support this statement, one needs to look no further than the black mold Hugh finds in the house's cellar. By synthesizing Bachelard's discussion on the similarities between the topography of the house and one's mind, according to which the roof is perceived as rational and the cellar as irrational and is thus marked as the "dark entity" *par excellence* (Bachelard 18),[52] with Freud's topographical model of the mind, in which the unconscious content is associated with the lowest, or more accurately, submerged level of the iceberg image, it can be argued that the mold comes from the irrational depths of Olivia's unconscious. The mold spreads vertically, from the basement to the house's attic, and, in that, mirrors the deterioration of Olivia's mental health. As mentioned, during the "Red Room" tea party in episode nine, Olivia attempts at murdering her children. Accordingly, the mold, which has by now engulfed the Red Room, parallels her inevitable disintegration. In the end, Hill House is not autonomously "evil" or "monstrous" as it is initially implied by its inhabitants, maintaining, instead, morbid promises. For example, after being murdered, Abigail materializes as one of Hill House's presences. As Mrs. Dudley is dying in the series finale, Mr. Dudley carries her to the house to rejoin their daughter. Thus, the autonomous agency of Hill House always already originates in its owner. The house is not supernaturally sentient but an instrument that is used and abused by its original owner. Analogously to Matheson's *Hell House*, the relationship between Hill House and Poppy is a reciprocal one. Poppy initially affects the house and, afterward, abuses it as a playground – prompting the past to invade the present and to instigate Olivia's and Nell's unresolved traumas, ultimately seducing them into committing atrocious acts of murder and suicide.

[52] In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard writes that the cellar "is first and foremost the *dark entity* of the house" (18) because in it "darkness prevails both day and night, and even when we are carrying a lighted candle, we see shadows dancing on the dark walls" (19). On the other hand, "the upper stories and the attic" symbolize "the rational zone of intellectualized projects" (18).

3.3.Conclusion – The Haunted House as an Instrument of Instigating the Return of the Repressed

The two subchapters aimed at asserting that Hell and Hill House's both external and internal attributes, although emblematic of the uncanny, are not uncanny *per se*. If, according to both phenomenology's and human geography's premise, places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, then the uncanny cannot be a particular place's *a priori* property. In line with Vidler's postulation, the two subchapters have positioned the uncanny as the experience of "spatial estrangement" (11) provoked by the projection of the original owner's non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it until the owner is dispersed or destroyed. According to phenomenology's and human geography's assertion, this projection was defined as a deliberate inscription that initially altered the house into an affective accumulation. Both Belasco and Hill have "impregnated" the house, scarily inverting its symbolic function and setting into motion the slippage between the sensations of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. Suddenly experiencing estrangement at the one place that was supposed to protect them, the inhabitants were abandoned to wander between Vidler's "waking and dreaming" (11). In other words, they were susceptible to being haunted by Belasco and Hill, who were patiently waiting for their victims. Therefore, the two subchapters took inspiration from Vidler's reformulation of Freud to underline the uncanny as a psychological phenomenon, a sensation that always stems from the subject because it arises as a result of the return of the repressed. Thus, they have also highlighted that the two case studies are not simply stories of otherworldly or supernatural haunting.

Because of the deeds that they have either executed and/or encouraged during and after their lifetime, both Belasco and Hill have been positioned as moral monsters. Despite the tendency to initially classify them as clichéic, the subchapters have argued that they have retained the marker of moral monstrosity because of their decision to deliberately haunt the inhabitants of both houses to obtain pleasure. Afterward, the subchapters have asserted that the interrelation between Belasco and Poppy and the two houses is reciprocal – both abuse the two houses as instruments to afflict the intruders. In this regard, the two architectural constructions under analysis are houses in the strictest sense, but they do not comply with the phenomenological ideal of the home as a nurturing haven. The two houses exist only to be violated, not by someone or something frightfully foreign but by the Other who is housed

within. As was argued throughout the two subchapters, the symbol of womb-like security is shattered. Instead, we witness an "anti," "adverse," "failed," or "non" house that functions as a location where one's imperfectly repressed content can be instigated into reappearing. While Belasco uses the house as a stage upon which he projects images of supposedly sentient presences to instigate the return of repressed instinctual impulses, Poppy uses it as a stage upon which she projects visions to instigate the return of unconfronted, and thus unresolved, traumas. Therefore, it is not the house itself that actively and independently instigates or, perhaps, provokes the reappearance of one's repressed content. The house signifies a "cradle" securing one's sense of belonging, but it also "constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (Bachelard 17). These "proofs" are played upon by both Belasco and Poppy, who initially produce such an illusion of security only to betray it.

Curtis explains that, "*in extremis*, it is crucial to carry out the revolutionary task of destroying the house" to evade being destroyed by it (168). However, the chapter contends that the monstrous propensities Hell and Hill House purportedly present always already originate in their owners. Contrary to the authors discussed in the chapter's introduction (Bailey, 1996; Magistrale, 2005; Curtis, 2008; Schmitz; 2015), these two houses are not autonomous agents of disruption capable of destroying their inhabitants or intruders, but instruments to achieve said disruption. All of the acts that transpired in Hell and Hill House highlight that the two houses are linked with their inhabiting ghosts. Precisely, both Belasco's and Poppy's "materiality" is dependent on the two houses, as they cannot venture outside of them. After all, the ghost always exists in relation to an architectural structure of some kind, be it a castle, a house, a manor, or a mansion. After Fischer confronts Belasco and exhumes his body from the basement, Hell House returns to its silent non-existence. Similarly, after Hugh's suicide in the series finale, Hill House, all of a sudden, stands silently, its doors sensibly shut ("Steven Sees a Ghost" 01:08:46-01:08:48). Thus, there is no need, as Curtis claims, to physically destroy the haunted house (168). In addition to substantiating that the houses never act independently from their original owners, the two subchapters have delineated Hell and Hill House as Belasco's and Poppy's "doubles," that is, "willed projection[s]" (35), according to Vidler's argument. Since the houses stop illustrating sentient inclinations as soon as the original owners are destroyed or dispersed, it can be concluded that they are always dependent on each other.

4. The Artificial Body as a Spatial Construct

In the introduction to *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818), Mary Shelley wrote: "I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper" (5). Ever since it was brought to literary life in Frankenstein's filthy laboratory, more than two hundred years ago, the progeny has indeed prospered by both spawning and inspiring innumerable adaptations. By introducing a creature that is a construction of somatic fragments stitched together, *Frankenstein* became the predecessor of narratives that invest monstrosity on the body itself, thus mapping "a new geography of terror."[53] After all, it was the creature's visual hideousness that initially repulsed its creator. As an embodiment of excess, introduced in incongruity with the human, Frankenstein's creature established a clear binary, thus enabling our conceptualization of the Other. The marker of monstrosity has since shifted – the body is no longer comprehensively recognizable, resisting classification and, thus, the stabilization of Otherness (Cohen, *Monster Theory* 6). Namely, contemporary monsters are characterized by their closeness to humans – breaking apart the bifurcating us/Other opposition they stress that the Other lies somewhere "within." After all, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen boldly claims that monsters are our children, arguing against an archetypal Other that asserts the marker of monstrosity as wholly visual (20).

And still, popular culture is populated with bodies continuously coded and decoded as different, deficient, and monstrous – that of women. It can be argued that the "threat" of the asexual woman, the sexual woman (the whore), the woman who does not perform her gender identity "properly" (the lesbian or the bisexual), the monstrous mother or the monster who rejects motherhood, the possessed monster, the monstrous womb, the vampire, the witch, the castrator (*vagina dentata*) or the castrated, to name just a few, still permeates popular culture.

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[53] In *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995), Jack Halberstam states that the moment Victor Frankenstein stitches together and animates the assembled flesh, skin, and bones in his "filthy workshop of creation," he gives birth to "body horror" (28). In other words, contrary to contemporary Gothic Romances of the late eighteenth century that construed locales, such as decrepit castles, dilapidated monasteries, and labyrinth-like mansions as loci of terror, Shelley introduced a new "geography of terror," in which fear was generated by the unnatural body (Ibid.). Shelley thus suggested that sutured skin, that is, the creature's less-than-human physiognomy, is what scares individuals into submission and, subsequently, marks it as visually monstrous.

Although scholars have been drawing attention to the misogynistic undercurrents that permeate contemporary portrayals of women (Creed 153), they are still often presented as passive objects and/or projections of male fears and fantasies.

In *The Generation of Animals*, Aristotle asserted the "man" as the human norm, and argued that the birth of female children was a clear sign that something had gone wrong in the reproductive process, marking them as subordinate and, accordingly, abnormal. Therefore, in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that ever since Aristotle, "patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men; the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity" (12). The debate was initiated, once again, during the infamous *querelle de femmes* of the sixteenth-century's early modern era, witnessing an increase in publications that were preoccupied with discussing the woman's "true" nature. The debate insisted upon the inferiority of women, inferring their "defects," and delineating them as inherently destructive, inconsistent, devious, deceitful, and with voracious sexual appetites (Brenner 166). The debate culminated in the seventeenth century, with pamphlets presenting women as controlling and monstrous tyrants, causing men to commit crimes involuntarily.[54] Aletta Brenner asserts that the anonymous author of the mid-seventeenth century's *A Brief Anatomie* originally outlined the oppositional duality between the two types of women, exemplifying their essential "goodness" or "evilness" (171). Based on Eve's birth from Adam's rib and Aristotle's claim that the formation of the female sex is an indicator of the reproductive system's inherent faultiness, the anonymous author asserted that the essentially "evil" women were visually deformed men, monstrous for both their psychological and physical deficiencies (172). As the conception of "natural" womanhood narrowed, the number of women confronting the conventions that marked them as inexorably and inescapably monstrous increased. The duality was especially dominant during the Victorian era,

[54] Brenner claims that the debate was caused by the publication of John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Specifically, Knox regarded the recent ascension of Elizabeth Tudor as abhorrent, arguing that women who violated their God-given roles were abominations: "To promote a Woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion, or empire above any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to Nature; contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance" (qtd. in Brenner 167).

exemplifying women as either "angels in the house,"[55] the submissively silent embodiments of eternal feminine virtues such as chastity, compliancy, and modesty, or as the "madwomen in the attic," their threatening antithesis, implying intransigent female autonomy. By coining the concept of "New Woman" in 1894, Sarah Grand[56] criticized the confining binary that construed women as either etherealized embodiments of "proper" Victorian values or as their deviant and destructive transgressors. Yet, because the "New Woman" was challenging codes of conduct by operating outside of prefigured Victorian patterns, she was castigated as the monster-woman.

Specifically, Gilbert and Gubar argue that the Victorian angel-woman was asserted as "her husband's holy refuge from the blood and sweat" that is a product of a life lived in the public sphere and as a self-sacrificing, submissive woman who lacks "a story of her own" and therefore listens, "gives advice and consolation, smiles, sympathizes" (22; 24). On the other hand, the monster-woman was understood as unfeminine, asserted as an accidental abnormality of nature to be confronted and, afterward, cast away (29). The Victorian monster-woman *par excellence*, the madwoman in the attic, was, according to the two authors, inveterately dehumanized and illustrated as the animalistic Other (xxxvi). The archetypal manifestation of such a madwoman is, of course, Charlotte Bronte's Bertha Mason, whose behavior is depicted as analogous to that of a wild, violent, and untamable animal. Still, Gilbert and Gubar infer that such incarnations indicate that the deformed and defective monster-women were made to illustrate the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, that is, man's ambivalence concerning his inability to control his physical existence (34). The idea that the imagery of the monster-woman was created in conjunction with her reproductive and/or mothering functions was further elaborated by Barbara Creed's immensely influential concept of the "monstrous feminine." Namely, it is the woman's reproductive power that fuels

[55] The concept of "the angel in the house" first appeared in Coventry Patmore's homonymous poem, published between 1854 and 1862. Precisely, the poem promotes the virtues of the ideal Victorian woman – passive and powerless, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and, above all, pure.

[56] Sarah Grand's article, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question" (1894), was particularly pertinent to the conception of the New Woman as it addressed the double standards apparent in Victorian marriages, insisting on the impeccable virtue on the part of the wife but not on the husband – a theme she later addressed in *The Heavenly Twins* (1894).

male anxieties of both physical and psychosocial castration. Creed claims that the woman can either be the castrator or the castrated, she terrifies because she signifies "lack" and, simultaneously, her "lack" grants her powers of castration.[57] Thus, her body is defined as deficient and/or different, potentially polluted and/or threatening, having a pre-assigned role in the heterosexual matrix – that of the Other. By inferring into the importance of gender in constructing the image of the monstrous feminine, she concluded that women were always already positioned, by the prevalent phallocentric and patriarchal ideology, in terms of their sexuality (*Monstrous Feminine* 2). Precisely, all of the processes of development occurring outside of the dominant phallocentric discourse are considered deviant and degenerate, defining women within the predetermined virgin versus whore duality. Women operating outside the dominant "Madonna-incarnate" discourse were also delineated as out of control, all-consuming, aggressive, and, according to Creed, portrayed as primeval and/or castrating mothers, vampires, *vagina dentatas*, witches, bleeding and/or monstrous wombs, and possessed bodies (Ibid.). Namely, as popular culture narratives are populated with a wide array of monstrous feminine bodies, the chapter intends on examining a body potentially existing outside of Creed's outlined paradigms – that of the cyborg. In other words, the technologically created body of the cyborg points toward its potentiality of invalidating, if not absolutely abolishing, the dualisms integral to the constitution of the very category of "woman."

As an amalgamation of artificial elements exceeding the human/animal, human/machine, organic/inorganic, and physical/non-physical division, the cyborg exists in a permanent state of confusion regarding its body and bodily boundaries. It offers an opportunity to transcend the phallocentric or male-centered. Thus, it is exceedingly relevant to Donna Haraway's rejection of essentialism. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), Haraway highlights that she "would rather be a cyborg than a

[57] In "Fetishism" Freud proposed that "probably no male human being is spared the fright of castration at the sight of a female genital" (qtd. in Creed 1). Although Creed draws from Freud's argument, she disagrees that the woman causes "fright" only because she is defined as the man's castrated Other. Creed positions "the difference of female sexuality as a difference which is grounded in monstrousness, and which invokes castration anxiety in the male spectator" (2). In her opinion, women are not only passive "victims" of castration but its autonomous perpetrators as well.

goddess" (181). Put differently, she demythologizes the dominant image of women as innately connected to nature, and valorizes instead the potentiality of the artificial body, which should be freed from such preconceived notions. Anticipating Judith Butler's inquiry into what constitutes the category of woman (*Gender Trouble* 2), Haraway asserts: "There is nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly complex category" (155). Analogously to Haraway, Butler argues against gender essentialism proposing, instead, that the category of gender is temporal (*Gender Trouble* 191). She defines gender as always already a doing, a repetition of different bodily gestures, movements, and styles (*Gender Trouble* 191). For Butler, "being female" is not a "natural fact" with ontological integrity but a cultural performance without an essence behind the appearance of gender (*Gender Trouble* xxxi).[58] Specifically, by reenacting bodily gestures and movements, one recreates the illusion of gender. Such an illusion is maintained "through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex" (*Gender Trouble* xxxi). Drawing from Simone de Beauvoir's claim that "one is not born but . . . becomes a woman" (68),[59] Butler claims that in order to become a woman, one must repeatedly materialize oneself in rigid obedience to predetermined possibilities ("Performative Acts" 522). Such a materialization is a strategic reenactment and

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[58] The concept of "performativity" was initially introduced by J. L. Austin's *How to do Things with Words* (1962). In the book, Austin elaborated on the distinction between constative or descriptive and performative language.

[59] In *The Second Sex* (1949), De Beauvoir claims that: "Woman is not a fixed reality but a becoming," and that "the body is not *a thing*, it is a situation" (68). On the other hand, "man" is not a natural species but a fully formed historical idea (68). Moreover, he never thinks of himself without invoking the Other, thus grasping the world under the emblem of essentialized dualities. Since the woman is different from the man who posits himself as the "same," she is consigned to the category of the "Other" (104). As with Butler's binary opposition between the human and the less-than-human, the function of the Other is to prevent the subjects from self-asserting themselves. Yet, the Other is still necessary for the subject because subjects attain themselves only through the reality of what they are not. In other words, a woman's ultimate function is to serve as a validation to the subject, that is, the man. De Beauvoir claims that "if there are other *Others* than the woman, she is still always defined as Other" (197). Therefore, while the woman is always already both defined and differentiated in relation to the man who represents the "Subject" or the "Absolute," he is not in relation to her (26). De Beauvoir claims that these differences are perhaps unimportant, perhaps destined to disappear in the near future, but, for now, they exist in strikingly obvious ways (24).

a re-experiencing of categories that cultivate gender integrity and that, in turn, affect the idea of a naturalistic necessity. The successful cultivation of one's gender grounds individuals within the framework of humanity. However, if one fails to do one's gender right, one is punished. For Butler, the necessity of punishment signifies "that the 'truth' or 'falsity' of gender is only socially compelled and in no sense ontologically necessitated" ("Performative Acts" 528). Put differently, one compels one's body to adhere to a historical idea of a "man" or a "woman," reducing gender to a strategy of survival (Ibid.).[60] Such a strategy enables individuals to be recognized in conformity with what is constituted as culturally intelligible, and to preserve the coherence among the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Therefore, to avoid being admonished as a logical impossibility, one must make sure that one's gender flows from one's sex and that one's practices of sexual desire follow from one's sex or gender. As for the latter, the heterosexualization of desire establishes an explicit binary between the asymmetrically antithetical notions of "feminine" and "masculine" that are acknowledged as "expressive attributes" of "male" and "female" (*Gender Trouble* 24). In *Undoing Gender*, Butler further elaborates on her argument by stating that "Sexuality does not follow from gender in the sense that what gender you 'are' determines what kind of sexuality you will 'have'" (16). She also abolishes the essentialized causality between the categories of gender and sex, for whatever inherent, "biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed" (*Gender Trouble* 9-10).[61] Finally, she argues that individuals are not only recognized based on gender but regulated by it because the body is

[60] Butler will return to this idea, once again, in *Undoing Gender* (2004). In the book, she claims that: "The terms by which we are recognized as human are socially articulated and changeable" (2). Thus, the term that confers "humaneness" on some individuals denies the same status to other individuals, thus constructing distinct categories between the human and the non- or less-than human (Ibid.). Still, a "discrete" gender is an important constituent of what categorizes an individual as human within contemporary culture (180). At the same time, she asks herself what happens when an individual becomes "that for which there is no place in the given regime of truth . . . where the human is encountered at the limits of intelligibility?" (58). Their bodies become unintelligible; they no longer underline the basic traits of mobility and agency but become, as Butler states, the sites of being done to (21).

[61] In *Undoing Gender* Butler elaborates on the statement by saying that there is a discontinuance between culturally constructed genders and sexed bodies because "it does not follow that the construction of 'men' will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that 'women' will interpret only female bodies" (4).

continuously exposed to the gaze and violence of others, becoming, in the process, the passive site of being done to (Ibid.).

Ultimately, both Haraway and Butler conclude that "woman" is a cultural construct, not a category that conveys integrity. Still, Haraway sees the promise of a post-gender embodiment in the figure of the cyborg, claiming: "The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation" (150). The cyborg, as an assemblage of synthetically produced parts, breaks down organic bodily boundaries in that it is a construction, as Haraway highlights in the citation above, that consists of both "imagination" and "reality." It also accentuates the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality as naturalized but not natural and, as Haraway argues, offers the possibility of a historical transformation. Haraway builds her myth around the destruction of unbendable boundaries, around both "social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines" (295). Thus, the fragmented body becomes, in Haraway's *Manifesto,* the symbol of cultural construction. Finally, she states that the future of the cyborg is a matter of survival (177). If, according to Butler, "[t]he lines we draw are invitations to cross over and that crossing over . . . constitutes who we are" (*Undoing Gender* 203), the cyborg could, in Haraway's opinion, invite us to do precisely that. Because the cyborg is an artificial creature, it exists outside of the categories of gender, race, and class.[62] As such, it has the potential to reconstruct the perception of the body as the naturalizing ground of a unitary and universalizing notion of the self.

Still, several feminist theorists (Balsamo, 2000; Cranny-Francis, 2000; Toffoletti, 2007) severely doubt if new technologies can offer possibilities for self-transformation and the transcendence of (corpo)reality. For example, Kim Toffoletti claims that the cyborg exists as "a site of ambiguity, as a transitional space where old ways of thinking about the self and the Other, the body and technology, reality and illusion, can't be sustained" (*Cyborgs and*

[62] According to Haraway, the cyborg has the potential to dissolve conventional categories of human/machine and human/animal because "[u]nlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city, and cosmos. The cyborg does not dream of a community on the model of the organic family . . . The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust" (151).

Barbie Dolls 14). As a human-machine union, the cyborg could offer possibilities of transforming identity politics based on binary oppositions, bringing forth more advanced articulations of subjectivity. However, although Toffoletti discusses the cyborg's capacity for portraying transformative states that transcend unstable markers of gender, sex, and sexuality, contrary to Haraway, she concludes that contemporary portrayals reinforce traditional patterns of power (78).[63] Similarly, Anne Cranny-Francis claims that the cyborg is not without "past," that is, it "is not without a cultural context or heritage, which both confers allusive power on that cyborg and also delimits its meaning potential" ("The Erotics of the (cy)Borg" 180). Therefore, the cyborg is not a promising construct of postmodern identity that could introduce liberatory options of self-identification.

In conclusion, Cranny-Francis warns that one must resist the temptation of universalizing it and analyze it, instead, within the narratives in which it appears (160). Similarly, Anne Balsamo also addresses the (in)adequacy of Haraway's postmodern icon in the context of its science-fiction representations.[64] She claims that "female-gendered cyborgs inhabit traditional feminine roles – as object of man's desire and his helpmate in distress. In this way, female cyborgs are as stereotypically endowed with feminine traits as male cyborgs are with masculine traits" ("Reading Cyborgs" 151). Accordingly, she asserts that cyborgs (re)produce limiting, not liberating gender stereotypes. Balsamo also claims that cyborgs are always already (re)interpretations, reassembled at another's will. Therefore, one should not universalize the cyborg's supposedly liberatory potential, perceiving it instead as "a product of cultural fears and desires that run deep within our psychic unconscious" (149). According to Balsamo's postulation, then, the cyborg represents that which cannot be represented

[63] Toffoletti highlights how women in Hollywood have rarely been represented as fully-fledged, complex characters but as secondary subjects – wives, daughters, lovers, or victims (51). She discusses the figure of the fashion doll Barbie to stress that women in capitalist culture, analogously to the famous fashion doll, are also commodities that can be freely bought, consumed, and manipulated at will (50). This is also true for the cyborg, produced by scientists only to be sexually consumed and, afterward, discarded. Furthermore, it is precisely the woman/machine union that proves to be the ultimate source of monstrosity and, so to say, a double threat to the rational patriarchal order (21). This is why the female cyborg has been represented as an embodiment of disfigured gender, threatening to end binary gender differences.

[64] To position female cyborgs as the epitome of masculine destruction, Balsamo primarily refers to James Cameroon's *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) and Paul Verhoeven's *Robocop* (1987).

otherwise – an otherness that calls into question the supposed stability or finality of our identity. Still, instead of signifying an ever-changing or fluid construction, the cyborg fails at challenging said stability or finality. Thus, contrary to Haraway, who claims that cyborgs could render the human/machine binary ambiguous, Balsamo concludes that contemporary representations of cyborgs reaffirm bourgeois notions of human and machine in a post-technological world (156). Far from being sites of "liminal transformation" (Haraway 177), contemporary cyborgs exacerbate the essentialized coherence between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. In summary, the processes of rethinking possible technological advances were influenced by a similar rethinking of their possible effects. Hence, Haraway's publication, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, created a certain amount of optimism when it was first published because it put forward the formerly unexplored promise of unsexed, ungendered, and non-sexualized "monsters" that could self-propagate freely, unburdened by preconceived categories. Yet, all of the aforementioned scholars have explicitly expressed their disappointment in the dream of a technologically achieved deconstruction.[65] Namely, contemporary portrayals of cyborgs are, we could say, still oddly obsessed with the body, decidedly reinforcing regressive distinctions.

The following subchapters will focus on two narratives, Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina* (2014) and Thomas Berger's novel *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* (2004). Shortly after writing an article about Garland's film, I noticed a missed opportunity that I wanted to include in my dissertation. Namely, the film focuses on the notion of bodily construction and deconstruction. The synthetic body is in a continuous state of construction; it is an illusory whole made up of parts connected in such a way that they can be easily removed

[65] In *Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity* (2004), Susan Short draws attention to Constance Penley and Andrew Ross's "Cyborg's at Large: An Interview with Donna Haraway," (1995) which was conducted ten years after the publication of her *Manifesto*. According to Short, in the interview, even Haraway herself "also admits that she cannot truly conceive of the cyborg as a 'post gender creature,' as formerly claimed in her *Manifesto*, admitting instead that 'it's a polychromatic girl . . . a girl who's trying not to become woman but remain responsible to women of many colors and positions; and who hasn't really figured out a politics that makes the necessary articulations with the boys who are your allies" (qtd. in Short 102). According to Short, Haraway's "necessary articulations" imply the importance of introducing an alliance between men and women (Ibid.). However, such an alliance is still absent, thus discounting the cyborg's potential for subverting the pre-established polarities.

and replaced. No part is principal, no part is privileged. They are equally interchangeable. Coupled with the idea that cyborgs cannot write themselves, since there is no "self" to write, I began to think about the artificial body as a spatial construct that, like the concept of the city and the house, is transformed through the inscription of the non-oneiric content of its creator. Initially, I was inclined to select Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives* (1972) for my second case study subsection. However, since Levin does not elaborate on how the submissive wives of Stepford were first created, I have decided to choose Berger's novel, which details the processes of bodily (re)construction. Much like Garland's film, the artificial body is constantly upgraded, its body parts perfected. It is also often disassembled, packaged, transported from one place to another – its "wholeness" reduced to its principal parts. Furthermore, Berger's novel can easily be analyzed in pair with Garland's film because they share a similar premise – the scientists, both in the film and the novel, build bodies bound by sexual desire, betraying their original intent to explore the limits of artificial intelligence. The subchapters seek to clarify that the portrayals of the three cyborgs, Garland's Ava and Kyoko and Berger's Phyllis, position their hyper-sexualized bodies as supreme expressions of the Butlerian sex-gender-sexuality sequence that institutes intelligible individuals.

As argued, an important implication of the artificial body is its potential transgression of pre-imposed boundaries. Boundaries, on the other hand, matter because the construction of one's identity operates through exclusionary means that establish the rigid distinction between us and Other. Therefore, drawing from Haraway's claim that the cyborg points toward a disturbingly tight coupling between the categories of human/animal and born/created (152), Elaine Graham concludes that the blurring of boundaries between said categories is monstrous because it indicates the dissolution of the "ontological hygiene" of humanity, that is, the dissipation of the Western dualisms which systematically separate human, machine, and animal (*Representations of the Post/Human* 11; 54). However, the two subchapters aim at asserting that the cyborg, although a continuously coded, decoded, and re-coded agglomeration of data, "a chaotic mixing and miscegenation of categories" (Graham 54), is not monstrous because of its technologically assisted body. In my view, the answer lies with its human creator or, more precisely, with the violence that occurs when a body is used as a site of, in Butler's words, "being done to" (*Undoing Gender* 52). Ultimately, the chapter intends on approaching the analysis of the cyborg's body from a so-far unexplored angle. Cyborg bodies exist in places, providing their structure through the vertical-horizontal and

left-right axes; at the same time, they *are* places. To substantiate the analysis of the body as a spatial construct or, better said, an affective accumulation of its creator's content, it is necessary to inquire into the body *itself.*

It was not until the mid-1990s that the body (re)surfaced as a serious subject of study, surpassing both Gaston Bachelard's and Yi-Fu Tuan's implications.[66] Namely, while Bachelard portrays the house as the *exemplar* of place,[67] Tuan believes bodies to be inanimate, implying that the very word does not evoke an animated and animating entity but, instead, an accessible object with observable properties (*Space and Place* 89). Furthermore, Tuan positions the body as a "container" which can either be "full" or "empty" (*Space and Place* 46). To Tuan, then, the body is an "'it,' and it is in space or takes up space" (*Space and Place* 34). Conversely, the word "man" does not call to mind a mere object occupying space but rather an autonomous agent who commands and, accordingly, creates it intentionally. Tuan returns to the same idea by implying that "the human body is a hierarchically organized schema; it is infused with values" (*Space and Place* 89). The notion of the body being "organized" and "infused" implies intentionality. However, he does not see the body as a

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[66] In "Geography and Gender, Cartographies and Corporealities" (1995), Gillian Rose focused on "a growing concern with the bodily" (545) in geography, noting that "an interest in the corporeal is becoming evident in a range of studies" (Ibid.). At the same time, Robyn Longhurst, in her article "Geography and Gender: A 'Critical' Time?" (1995), positioned the body as "geography's Other" (102), noting how it has been simultaneously "denied and desired depending on the particular school of geographical thought under consideration" (Ibid.). Linda McDowell, in *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (1999), asserted that the absence of the body from geographical discourse pointed toward it being positioned as a fundamentally "private concern" (35), primarily because it raised "uncomfortable" questions about the significance of physical differences between men and women (36). Namely, with the re-theorization of the body as a changeable construct came the understanding that its physical characteristics and its gender performance need not necessarily conform.

[67] In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard does not discuss the body *per se* but compares it to a shell: "We might say that the inside of a man's body is an assemblage of shells. Each organ has its own causality . . . The function constructs its form from old models, and life, although only partial, constructs its abode the way the shell-fish constructs its shell" (113). Specifically, Bachelard states that the human body is, not unlike the shell, a container constructed "from old models," or, more precisely, by "life . . . which constructs its abode the way the shell-fish constructs its shell" (113). Although Bachelard asserts that the body becomes "the original shell" (40) which enables one's survival, he does not further elaborate on its constructedness.

spatial construct that is construed via intentional inscription although he inadvertently asserts it to be, analogously to the house, an affective accumulation of "values." Contrary to both Bachelard and Tuan, the human geographer Linda McDowell positions the body, and not the house, as "the most immediate place, the location or site . . . of the individual" (*Gender, Identity, and Place* 34).[68] Contrary to Tuan, she explicitly emphasizes that the body can be perceived as both a subject that structures the surrounding spaces through the vertical-horizontal and left-right axes and an object. Focusing on its fluidity and flexibility, McDowell also asserts that it is consistently (re)constructed (39). In line with phenomenology's and human geography's argument, the dissertation's introduction positioned place as a relational category that is continuously constructed and reconstructed through individual actions and interpersonal interactions. Namely, it negated the pre-existence of place, positioning it, instead, as the affective accumulation of both oneiric and, in my reading, non-oneiric content. According to McDowell's assertion, the body is the place *par excellence*, and its traits of "plasticity" and "malleability" stress that it is subjected to continuous construction (34). Therefore, it follows that it is, not unlike the house, transformed through the inscription of one's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. The body, Balsamo contends, is "the site of fragmented identities and affinities – in short, the site of material practice" (154). Thus, the body is a site of one's subjective "affinities," a product of specific practices. Balsamo also contends that the artificial body is a product of desires permeating one's unconsciousness (149). Following the two authors' formulation, the chapter aims at outlining the cyborg's artificial body as an affective accumulation of its creator's non-oneiric content.

Furthermore, Balsamo's focus on the body demonstrating one's unconscious desires (Ibid.) allows for the analysis of the artificial body as, according to Vidler's appropriation of the unheimlich, an external representation of one's repressed content. Or, as Vidler states: "the 'uncanny' is not a property of the space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation; it is . . . a representation of a mental state of projection" (11). The two subchapters will draw from Vidler's understanding of the uncanny precisely because the

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[68] In the introduction to *Space, Gender, and Knowledge* (1997), published the same year as McDowell's *Gender, Identity, and Place*, editors McDowell and Sharpe state that the body is a "surface to be mapped, a surface for inscription, as a boundary between the individual subject and that which is Other to it, as the container of individual identity, but also as a permeable boundary which leaks and bleeds and is penetrable" (3).

uncanny, as a psychological experience of something that is, at the same time, familiar and unfamiliar, subverts the precept that one's sense of sight provides comprehension of and certitude in one's surroundings. Put differently, due to it being suspended in a limbo-like state between being "alive" and animated, it is initially tempting to assert the artificial body as uncanny *per se*. Still, it will be argued that the uncanny is not affected, in the Jentschian sense, by intellectual uncertainty or, more precisely, by a "doubt as to whether an apparently animate being is really alive" (qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 125). It is affected by the desublimation of the supposedly sublimated instinctual impulses. In other words, the uncanny will be outlined as the experience of estrangement provoked by the projection of the owner's non-oneiric content on the body that contains it as a property. In particular, in line with phenomenology's and human geography's premise, the projection is defined as a deliberate inscription that initially transformed the artificial body into an affective accumulation. Therefore, the two subchapters seek to clarify how the agents of construction, or in this case, the two male scientists, inscribe the content onto the bodies they create.

Specifically, in line with Freud's theory of repression, the content refers to their repressed instinctual impulses, interpreted as either deviation in respect to the sexual object, as in Nathan Bateman's case, or unresolved Oedipal impulses, as in Ellery Pierce's case. In the second chapter, I have attempted to clarify that neither Hell nor Hill House acquires autonomous agency, acting independently of their original owners. However, the two subchapters consider cyborgs who either possess or obtain artificial intelligence, eventually turning against their human creators. If the cyborg's body is a spatial construct created through the scientist's inscription, it is possible to argue that places and selves are interdependent, affecting and, possibly, afflicting each other. However, the two subchapters will seek to clarify that the supposed sentience of the cyborgs populating the two narratives remains a result of their initial inscription. Put differently, it is always already pre-programmed by their creators. Moreover, the chapter will also argue that cyborg bodies are not monstrous because they confuse the always-present human/machine antithesis that, in turn, interprets them as culturally unintelligible. If anything, because of being adjacent to humanity, cyborg bodies invite the violence of initial inscription of instinctual impulses and ensuing sexual exploitation, exposing, in turn, the moral monstrosity of both Garland's and Berger's human scientists.

Finally, besides becoming the predecessor of narratives that invest monstrosity on the body itself, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*[69] left another legacy by providing the first depiction of what popular culture has since portrayed as the "mad scientist." Such a stereotypical scientist exemplifies several central characteristics; he is gender-specified, portrayed as pretentious, compulsively concentrated on research that, in turn, renders him contemptuous and, oft-times, oblivious of the obligation to endorse extant norms (Haynes, "Whatever happened to the 'mad, bad' scientist?" 33). He is secretive, inattentive to surrounding individuals, an overreacher, often unable to communicate outside of his discipline, and obsessively determined to overstep human limitations (34). Although Roslynn Haynes argues that the trope of the "mad scientist" has been "eroded" in contemporary popular culture (35), the two protagonists under discussion, Garland's Nathan Bateman and Berger's Ellery Pierce, reinforce said stereotypes. For example, when Caleb reflects on becoming a god, Garland's Nathan automatically presupposes that he *is* a "god," and that his laboratory-like research facility resembles Haraway's utopian Garden, where Ava, who is not only his creation but is created from him, should behave as submissively as the Biblical Eve. Ultimately, he is revealed as being nothing more than a tech-obsessed narcissist. Besides being conceited, Nathan avoids answering Caleb's inquiries into the specificities of AI construction. Apart from Kyoko, later revealed as his mute cyborg-housemaid, Nathan lives all alone in his secluded facility in Alaska.

Similarly, Berger's Ellery secretly assembles the artificial woman in his workshop, safely hidden in his holiday house. He is compulsively concentrated on creating the "perfect" partner to the extent that the selection of synthetic skin alone took ages. Archetypal in his inattentiveness to individuals, Ellery cannot establish a meaningful connection with anyone. Finally, Phyllis's conception and following creation only fuel his contemptuousness – upon completing his "personal project," Ellery considers himself capable of every endeavor. Still,

[69] Anne K. Mellor detected a mad streak in Victor's mental makeup, developing it in terms of a particular personality type that clearly acquired a cult status in the creation of R.L. Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Also, she argued that "Shelley's portrait of Victor [was] more subtle than [its] subsequent media versions" (*Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* 127). Afterward, the figure of the "mad scientist" was replicated in Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove (1964), while a more recent engagement with the "mad" Frankensteinian model is exemplified by the character of Hannibal Lecter, both in Jonathan Demme's film *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and in Bryan Fuller's television series *Hannibal* (2013-2015).

because both Nathan and Ellery are not exclusively interested in, as Haynes explains, the pursuit of knowledge (34) but in the endless sexual exploitation of their cyborg creations, I intend on interpreting them as "bad" scientists or, specifically, moral monsters. One of the abiding ambiguities in interpreting what Michel Foucault has called a "criminal" or "moral monster" is that this transgressor "prefers his own interest to the laws governing the society to which he belongs," while at the same time standing outside that very law (92). Under the pretense of investigating the acquisition of artificial intelligence, both Nathan and Ellery stand "outside" of societal laws, well-hidden in their respective homes. Still, instead of perceiving the potentiality of a technologically assisted de-materialization, they prioritize their personal interests and abuse the artificial bodies as a means of sexual gratification.

4.1.Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* (2014)

After providing the summary of Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina*, the subchapter aims at clarifying that the cyborg is not constructed as an artificial amalgamation capable of portraying transformative states of (corpo)reality (Haraway 171), or the naturalized coherence between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 34). On the contrary, technology is seen as a tool of the human scientist who uses it to create a consumable commodity, thus conflating his desire to create and copulate, and reinforcing regressive stereotypes of contemporary cyborgs being subjected to constant sexual abuse. Besides building hyper-sexualized bodies that, although unnatural, naturalize the sex-gender-sexuality dialectics, Nathan simultaneously shapes and stimulates Ava's and Kyoko's "self." Therefore, the subchapters will argue against the cyborg's supposed sentience, inferring that it always already acts according to pre-programmed patterns. According to Linda McDowell's aforementioned assessment of the body being the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" pointing toward its continuous construction (34), the subchapter aims at arguing that it is, not unlike the house, transformed through the inscription of an individual's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. If Nathan is primarily concerned with creating so-called "sex-bots" or, better said, of bodies subjected to constant and consistent sexual abuse, it follows that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Anne Balsamo's "unconscious desires" (149), or, in my reading, of repressed instinctual impulses. Therefore, the uncanny is not endangered by "intellectual uncertainty" in the Jentschian sense but by the desublimation of the supposedly

sublimated instinctual impulses. Ultimately, the central intention of the chapter is to argue that the cyborg is not monstrous *per se*, but that because it is non-human or adjacent to humans, it invites the violence of the initial inscription of instinctual impulses and leads to physical exploitation, which in turn reveals the moral monstrosity of *Ex Machina*'s human scientist.

The film *Ex Machina* (2014), written and directed by Alex Garland, follows programmer Caleb Smith, who wins a corporate lottery to visit Nathan Bateman, the CEO of Blue Book, in Alaska. Upon arrival, Caleb signs a non-disclosure agreement, accepting not to divulge any sensitive information to third parties. He soon learns that the CEO wants him to act as a human interlocutor in a Turing Test in order to investigate whether his artificial creations are passable as humans. Caleb later explains that the Turing Test is "when a human interacts with a computer. And if the human does not know they are interacting with a computer, the test is passed" (00:10:32-00:10:40). Accordingly, the cyborg is asserted as capable of achieving artificial intelligence.[70] However, as argued elsewhere, it is important to stress that the film approaches the issue from the presumption that cyborgs already illustrate artificial intelligence and sentience, which, in turn, immediately invalidates Nathan's supposedly scientific intentions (Musap, "Why is 'It' Gendered" 404). Specifically, although the implicit rules of the Turing Test indicate the importance of the interviewer being physically removed from the interviewee to prevent the possibility of being affected on a visual level, Nathan encourages Caleb to engage in intimate conversations with his creation, Ava (Ibid.). Nathan draws attention to Ava's artificiality from their first encounter, explaining how if Caleb were only to hear her voice, he would immediately see her as intelligent. It can be said, then, that Nathan's primary concern is not whether an artificial construction can pass for a human. Rather, as will be shown, he seems to be interested in whether Caleb will categorize Ava as human, even though he not only sees but, from their first session, clearly understands that she is an artificial construction.

[70] Since both Garland's *Ex Machina* and Berger's *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* do not devote time to defining "artificial intelligence," within the context of the chapters it is interpreted as the ability of the cyborg to copy human intelligence processes, "learn from experiences, adapt to new information, and perform human-like activities" (Burns, "Artificial Intelligence").

There are seven sessions in total. Each time, Caleb's conversation with Ava is followed by a conversation with Nathan. These sessions also portray how the two main protagonists transgress their initially restrictive roles and become allies who want to free Ava from Nathan's facility. From the beginning of the film, Ava's body is laid bare before both the spectators' and Caleb's eyes. Namely, Ava was clearly made and, like Frankenstein's creature, not given birth to. Her body is also a stitched form – circuitous fiber cable illuminates her body, while a finely-netted material resembles a corset that contains her artificial interiority. Such a body firmly fixes her within the human versus machine binary. Her mechanical limbs, capable of human-like expression, perpetuate the illusion or, better said, the delusion of humanity. From the beginning of the film, Ava is established as an ontological enigma to be successfully solved because, at first, Ava's apparent artificiality causes Caleb to consider Nathan's decision to, according to Butler, create coherence among the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. In other words, Caleb wonders: "Why did you give her sexuality? An AI does not need a gender" (00:46:01-00:46:07). Caleb does not explicitly differentiate between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality the way Butler does. Since the cyborg's body is an assemblage of artificial components, it lacks a sex-specific essence. As for the category of gender, Caleb does not see it as inherent or innate; he sees it as an external attribute engineered onto Ava's exteriority.

Similarly, he sees sexuality as an evolutionary reproductive need, needlessly assigned to an artificial amalgamation. It is safe to say that Caleb inadvertently substantiates Butler's idea that "Sexuality does not follow from gender in the sense that what gender you 'are' determines what kind of sexuality you will 'have'" (*Undoing Gender* 16). Nathan disregards Caleb's notion of a non-sexual entity, asking him to "give an example of consciousness, at any level, human or animal, that exists without a sexual dimension" (00:46:10-00:46:17). Caleb also claims that Nathan could have created Ava as a "grey box;" a construction with the capacity for portraying transformative states that transcend (corpo)reality (Haraway 171) and, in Butler's words, the changeable and revisable realities of both "sex" and "gender" (*Gender Trouble* 34). Still, by imagining Ava as a passive receptacle, Caleb clearly positions her within the existing gender binary, thus betraying his initial concern with the consequences of bodily construction. As for Nathan, he believes that cyborgs should be constructed in conformity with what is constituted as culturally intelligible to be, in Butler's words, recognized as human (*Gender Trouble* 23). In the context of the film, the process of bodily

recognition is, in fact, the precondition for passing the Turing Test. Nathan also inserts Ava with a fully functioning vagina, thus establishing an immediately coherent gender(ed) identity. Precisely, he builds her body to be penetrable via the mechanical orifice and to simulate pleasure via the mechanical sensors. According to Nathan, the capability to consume and to be consumed is her body's central characteristic:

> You want to remove the chance of her falling in love and fucking? And in answer to your real question, you bet she can fuck . . . In between her legs, there's an opening with a concentration of sensors. You engage them in the right way, [it] creates a pleasure response. So, if you wanted to screw her, mechanically speaking, you could, and she'd enjoy it. (00:46:47-00:47:03)

The focus on "fucking" immediately presupposes Ava's "penetrability" as her most important physical feature. Interestingly, Nathan draws a parallel between the act and falling in love, as if the latter were an option that can be "turned on" by the designer to accompany the former. However, in the context of *Ex Machina*, "falling in love" has nothing to do with the notion of selfless love that Ava could potentially "feel" toward someone and everything to do with the selfish, unrestrained enactment of both Caleb's and Nathan's sexual desires. Moreover, Nathan sees sexuality[71] or, specifically, sexual desire as the immediate instigator of interaction (Musap 405). Clearly irritated by Caleb's dismissive comments, he asks him: "What imperative does a grey box have to interact with another grey box?" (00:46:21-00:46:25). He also asserts how he did not preprogram Ava to like and then fall in love with Caleb. Still, he says: "I programmed her to be heterosexual. Just like you were programmed to be heterosexual. – Nobody programmed me to be straight. – You decided to be straight? Please. Of course, you were programmed. By nature, or nurture, or both" (00:48:20-00:48:33). His decision to design, that is, preprogram Ava as heterosexual establishes an expressive coherence between the constituted categories of sex, gender, and sexual desire. Nathan naturalizes her heterosexuality to the extent that the coherence among the categories expresses that heterosexual desire echoes her gender and vice-versa. Namely, this

[71] As argued elsewhere, in *Ex Machina*, "sexuality is perceived as the capacity of having sexual feelings, that is, being sexually attracted to another person. In this context, sexuality conforms to Butler's conception of sexual desire" (Musap 405).

naturalization both "requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 31), establishing a cosistency between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Most importantly, Ava's synthetic body substantiates Butler's argument that these categories are not pre-determined but concurrently produced and reproduced, in the context of *Ex Machina*, by its human creator.

Specifically, the supposed coherence between these categories is, according to Butler's theory of performativity, always already an illusion that averts the appearance of incoherent individuals (*Gender Trouble* 23). Nathan believes this illusion to be the precondition for passing the Turing Test. Regardless of her artificiality, Caleb needs to acknowledge Ava as complying with, in Butler's words, consistent sequences that create the appearance of an abiding substance (*Gender Trouble* 33). To achieve this, Nathan urges Caleb to forget about logic and to focus on feelings instead: "How do you feel about her?" (00:17:16-00:17:18) he asks, "Nothing analytical" (00:17:19-00:17:20). In doing so, he underscores the importance of Caleb not rationalizing Ava's ability to illustrate artificial intelligence. "I feel that she is fucking amazing" (00:17:24-00:17:30), Caleb eventually admits. At first, Caleb wonders in a seemingly rational way if Nathan created Ava as attractive to confuse him. He says: "My real question was, did you give her sexuality as a diversion tactic? – I don't follow . . . So, a hot robot who clouds your ability to judge her AI? – Exactly. So… Did you program her to flirt with me?" (00:47:10-00:47:28). However, despite his initial reluctance, Caleb eventually begins to fall in love with her. Nathan, who is constantly watching Ava and Caleb over the closed circuit, is aware of Caleb's attraction and eventually reveals that bodily features match his secretly monitored pornographic preferences. If one's "gender is," according to Butler, "a fabrication and true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the bodies" (qtd. in Musap 408), it is then safe to say that *Ex Machina*'s fantasy, as argued elsewhere, is a masculine one (Ibid.).

Specifically, Ava's appearance imitates that of a young woman in her early twenties; she has "an hourglass figure," "a narrow waist, small breasts," and seemingly "delicate limbs" (Ibid.). Such a delicate frame conveys a sense of fragility, archetypally aligned with the image of the ideal feminine figure, further marking her body as an exterior expression of masculine fantasy. As evident throughout the film, her body is built to provoke Caleb's sexual desire.

Throughout the film, Caleb is mainly interested in Ava's bodily construction, and not in investigating her mental ontology. Perhaps, this is because he has already assessed Ava as having artificial intelligence. During their fifth session, Ava asks Caleb if failing the Turing Test means she will be switched off. Caleb expresses his astonishment after Nathan declares that model 9.7 will be constructed by re-using Ava's components. As a result, Ava's mind will be downloaded, the data unpacked, and, afterward, the program re-written. Specifically, Caleb sees the act of formatting or, more precisely, of erasing her memories, as analogous to Nathan killing her. However, it can be concluded that Caleb's interest in Ava is primarily due to being sexually attracted to her appearance (Musap 410), reflecting Nathan's recognition of sexuality or, specifically, of sexual desire as the decisive aspect affecting one's motivation for interpersonal interaction.

Besides Ava, there are other cyborgs and cyborg body parts populating Nathan's facility or, better said, body factory. At the beginning of the film, Nathan introduces Kyoko as his non-English speaking Asian housemaid: "Dude, you're wasting your time talking to her. She doesn't understand English . . . It's like a firewall against leaks. It means I can talk trade secrets over dinner and know it'll go no further. It also means that I can't tell her that I'm pissed when she's so fucking clumsy that she spills wine over my house guest . . . Hey, Kyoko. Go-go" (00:32:12-00:32:39). Kyoko's two-dimensional depiction as a subordinate image without sound initially positions her as nothing more than a passive stand-in in the narrative. After all, Nathan dismisses her at his wish and whim. However, Caleb soon learns that Kyoko is more than a flattened filler; she is Nathan's sex slave. As mentioned, according to the Turing Test, the cyborg must pass for the human it was designed to replicate. According to Butler, the mark of gender qualifies bodies as human ones (*Gender Trouble* 151). Contrary to Ava, Kyoko re-enacts and re-experiences in conformity with what is constituted as culturally intelligible. It is when she peels off patches of her non-organic skin, uncovering her circuitous composition, that she becomes the artificial body *par excellence*, impairing, in Butler's words, "the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (*Gender Trouble* 191). Because Caleb does not doubt her "humaneness," it is evident that she has already passed the Turing Test. Not unlike Ava's, her presence unmistakably invalidates Nathan's intention of assessing artificial intelligence, thus substantiating the statement that Nathan is principally

interested in the process of self-mythologization. When Caleb reflects on becoming a "god," Nathan immediately assumes that he is a god.[72] Therefore, his allegedly benevolent intentions degenerate into amoral self-aggrandizement and arrogance. When Caleb admits that he does not understand why Nathan made Ava, he answers: "That's an odd question. Wouldn't you if you could?" (01:04:14-01:04:19). Nathan's childish-like explanation rejects the potential repercussions of "playing God" through creating new life.

Namely, Nathan is the epitome of masculinity, an intelligent, billionaire programmer, and an attractive bodybuilder constantly showing his physical fitness and primacy (Musap 408). He is also an eccentric narcissist, oscillating between being enigmatic and, at times, very verbal. Caleb first meets Nathan when he has just finished his workout. He is wiping the sweat from his face and warning Caleb that he has one hell of a hangover, which, of course, does not prevent him from further drowning in alcohol. It can be said that this scene highlights Nathan's hyper-masculinity. However, it also highlights how this hyper-masculine individual dismisses the consequences of bodily construction and, in Haraway's words, the technological possibilities of transcending (corpo)reality (151). Therefore, it may be argued that, in his hands, technology becomes a tool of the privileged, white, male scientist who uses and abuses it to engender a consumable commodity that, in turn, conflates his desire to create and copulate. Namely, Kyoko is constructed in conformity with Nathan's preferences – she is subservient, speechless, serves his dinner, cleans his house, and, most importantly, pleasures him sexually: "She's some alarm clock, huh? Gets you right up in the morning" (00:24:33-00:24:37). Since she is speechless and incapable of affirming her artificial intelligence, it is safe to say that Kyoko was primarily programmed to sexually serve. For example, in one of the scenes, Nathan is working out while Kyoko is standing quietly beside him, holding a towel. As soon as Nathan is finished with his workout, he pushes her up against the wall.

Throughout the film, Kyoko is consistently shown as the subject of sexual abuse that she was programmed to be. Furthermore, right before Nathan and Kyoko's dance scene, she

[72] At the beginning of the film, Caleb says: "If you've created a conscious machine, it's not the history of man. That's the history of gods" (00:11:09-00:11:16) When recalling Caleb's comment later in the film, Nathan says: "You know, I wrote down that other line you came up with. The one about how if I've invented a machine with consciousness, I'm not a man, I'm God . . . I just thought, fuck, man, that is so good" (00:15:28-00:15:40).

starts undressing, offering herself to Caleb and triggering his vehement response: "What the fuck? No, no, no. No! Stop! No, no, don't do that. Don't do that. You don't have to do that. What are you doing?" (00:57:56-00:58:09). As stated, both Ava and Kyoko are constructed as capable of engaging in sexual intercourse. When Caleb enquires into Nathan's decision to devise penetrable bodies, he says: "Anyway, sexuality is fun, man. If you are gonna exist, why not enjoy it?" (00:46:29-00:46:34). Later in the film, Caleb sees several cyborgs' faces, eerily displayed like hunting trophies, hanging on the wall. The faces, usually the most articulate parts of the body and the most important markers of one's individuality, are indistinguishable from one another, becoming, in turn, nothing more than mere household adornments. In other words, they are diminished to gruesome wall-décor. Shortly after, Caleb steals Nathan's security card, hacks his computer, and watches different surveillance videos, seeing for the first time all the cyborgs Nathan created before Ava. As mentioned elsewhere, he is shocked to see violated bodies – a pair of dismembered legs, a headless cyborg, and an Asian cyborg who is trying to break the glass while violently yelling: "Why won't you let me out?" (01:10:28-01:10:30, qtd. in Musap 408). The woman brutally destroys her own body by slamming her hands against the glass cubicle that serves as her prison. This prompts Caleb to examine Nathan's bedroom closet, where he discovers bodies in various states of dismemberment. Eventually, he realizes that they are all built similarly to Ava's. It can be argued that both these bodiless faces and faceless bodies that are dispersed throughout Nathan's facility principally function as signifiers of his sexual preferences. Additionally, these artificial body parts seem to call for Caleb's approval. After all, they are displayed in Nathan's closet like purchasable commodities to be looked at. They were built by a man for men only.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise then that the initial release of *Ex Machina* was followed by a discussion on the supposedly promising portrayal of post-gender (dis)embodiment.[73] It can be concluded that Nathan consistently and continuously

[73] Critics see Garland's cyborgs as consolidating dualities instead of reconceptualizing the corporeal. For example, Charlie Jane Anders claims that the film has "no female characters" since they function as the "lens through which male attitudes are refracted" ("From *Metropolis* to *Ex Machina*: Why are so Many Robots Female?"). J. A. Micheline, on the other hand, asserts that Ava's liberation is achieved through the negation of other bodies, namely Kyoko's, but also of all of the dismembered and discarded cyborgs found in Nathan's

(re)produces limiting, not liberating, roles. Far from portraying states that surpass, in line with Butler's argument, the artificially constructed categories of sex, gender, and sexuality, *Ex Machina* reinstitutes, in turn, regressive stereotypes of contemporary cyborgs as the objects of the human scientist's sexual desire (Balsamo 151). It is not my intention to go into detail about the film's lack of potential precisely because, aside from Caleb's brief comment that "[s]he could have been a grey box" (00:46:07-00:46:10), it offers no opportunity to produce bodies that are not inhibited by the regulatory practices of the past. Even in instances in which Caleb addresses Ava as a "box," he still uses female pronouns, further humiliating her to a penetrable, passive receptor. Caleb's comment asserts that their relationship can only ever be asymmetrical; she is the passive receptor, while he is the active penetrator. Despite the technological possibilities of rebuilding the body in artificial flesh, Ava and Kyoko further fortify the gendered male versus female binary, thus stressing that the "transgressive" representations proposed by scholars such as Haraway cannot simply be achieved visually (Musap 411). Therefore, it is apt to argue that the film builds the tension around the idea that, to paraphrase Butler, the dissolution of gender(ed) binaries would, indeed, be very terrifying and monstrous (*Gender Trouble* viii). If Nathan exemplifies the physically abusive side of hegemonic masculinity, then both of these cyborgs represent nothing more than an axiom of femininity in a patriarchal society. In conclusion, Garland's cyborgs subvert the promise of monsters, precisely because they are constructed through the regime of heterosexism, represented by *Ex Machina*'s hyper-masculine scientist (Musap Ibid.).[74] Specifically, this means that the only way for Ava and Kyoko to break free is to leave their bodies behind. But

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closet. According to Micheline, *Ex Machina* is guilty of prioritizing "white feminism" over the freedom of other marginalized female characters as Ava literally peels the "skin off a woman of color's back" to flee from Nathan's lair-like facility ("*Ex Machina*: A (White) Feminist Parable for our Time"). Kjerstin Johnson also argues that Kyoko's portrayal is problematic as she symbolizes "long-standing stereotypes of Asian women – sexy, servile, and self-sacrificing" ("How '*Ex Machina*' Toys with its Female Characters"). Furthermore, her essential "function" is equally problematic since she is portrayed as a passive "foil to the white female lead" (Ibid.). Katherine Cross is one of the harshest critics of Garland's film, claiming that Nathan is a highly problematic figure precisely because he views himself as a "father" to all of the cyborgs he is clearly taking advantage of sexually and that his aim is not to assess artificial intelligence but to create disposable "fucktoys" ("Goddess from the Machine").

[74] For further discussion on the film's feminist potential see "Why is 'It' Gendered: Constructing Gender in Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* (2015)."

unlike in Haraway's previously mentioned book, the body remains the main template for their identification and passing as human. Accordingly, both Ava and Kyoko are asserted as objects of masculine techno-fetishism rather than genderless entities obstructing the existing binary order.

As argued, Nathan constructs cyborg bodies according to his liking, continuously producing and reproducing their physical components. Although lacking biological sex, they are inserted with artificial vaginas and, subsequently, programmed to perform or, more precisely, to conform to culturally entrenched binaries. In comparison to the construction of the body, the construction of subjectivity is not as straightforward. From the very beginning of the film, Ava is apparently "aware" of her artificiality: "Well, you already know my name. And you can see that I'm a machine" (00:14:10-00:14:17). She also states that it is highly unusual how she always knew how to talk because speech is something that human beings acquire gradually. In line with Butler's assertion, Ava reduces gender to a "strategy of survival" ("Performative Acts" 528). Namely, to escape her confinement, she performs according to established gender(ed) essentialisms. When Ava and Caleb first meet, she presents herself as utterly "child-like and ignorant," slowly "manipulating him into assuming the position of her [experienced] mentor" (Musap 406). Innocently, she wonders whether he will return. She is also interested in his private life, inquiring where he lives, whether it is nice there, whether he is married, and what his family is like, ultimately warning him that he should not trust Nathan's intentions. Still, as soon as they develop a sense of familiarity, she assumes the role of the seductress.

Initially, Ava is intent on analyzing magazine cut-outs to clarify which facial and bodily features are considered attractive in women. Ava soon realizes that skin is a prerequisite for passing as visually appealing. Thus, she covers her silver meshed scalp with a short wig and her body with a wavy dress and white stockings. She courts Caleb, ostensibly to gain his approval, by asking: "Are you attracted to me? You give me indications that you are . . . Micro-expressions. The way your eyes fix on my eyes and lips. The way you hold my gaze or don't" (00:43:53-00:44:16). By putting on pieces of clothing, Ava sexualizes her non-sexual body through the spectacle of covering and subsequent exposure. In a number of cyborg-centered narratives, male scientists are attracted to the parts of the body where the cyborg's artificial skin appears fragile. They want to investigate it or tear it apart to see what

is underneath so that they can unravel the mystery of its mechanical inner workings. As Butler argues, "the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others but also to touch and to violence" (*Undoing Gender* 21). If these violent processes point toward the act of knowing, then Ava's decision to cover herself with clothes underlines her desire to remain unknowable. Ava also wants to complicate Caleb's perception – by hiding herself with clothes, she becomes more-than-machine. Thus, this counter process signifies a gender performance *par excellence*; Ava transforms her part-machine-part-meat exteriority into a cohesive, comprehensible unit for Caleb to consume.

Ava also alludes to his voyeurism, innocently inquiring: "Do you think about me when we are not together? Sometimes at night? I am wondering if you are watching me on the cameras. And I hope you are" (00:44:26-00:44:42). Afterward, she undresses seductively, aware that Caleb is watching her. Ava's actions personify Butler's postulation of gender as always already a doing, a never-ending performance that constitutes the illusion of the pre-existence of an essence (*Gender Trouble* 34). Specifically, such a performance presupposes a contingent construction of meaning. By studying the signifiers that constitute the category of "woman," Ava reproduces social expectations. Such expectations require and regulate gender as an opposition in which the "masculine" is separated from the "feminine" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 31), resulting in the internal integrity of sex, gender, and heterosexual desire. Coherently presenting herself to Caleb, Ava acts in conformity with the formulation necessitated for the persuasive performance and "fixing" of femininity. Ava's uncovering of her non-sexual but sexualized body in one of the subsequent scenes leaves Caleb inarticulate, stressing the successfulness of said performance. A close-up of his throat slowly swallowing indicates his sexual arousal. Of course, the best indicator of her intelligibility as a "woman" occurs when Caleb starts falling in love with her and, as a result, devises an escape plan from Nathan's facility. However, he fails to realize that Ava is using him as a means of escape. After Caleb admits that Ava has successfully passed the Turing Test, partially because of his own biased opinion on her liking him, Nathan asks:

> How do you know if a machine is expressing a real emotion or just simulating one? Does Ava actually like you? Or not? Although now that I think about it, there is a third option. Not whether she does or does not have the capacity to like you. But whether she's pretending to like you. – Pretending to like me? – Yeah. – Well, why would she

do that? I don't know. – Maybe she thought of you as a means of escape." (01:19:58-01:20:48)

At the end of the film, it becomes clear that Ava was, indeed, pretending the whole time. Kyoko stabs Nathan, and Ava fools Caleb, locking him in the room which, until recently, imprisoned her. As will be soon argued, Ava's capacity to "express," "stimulate," "like," and "pretend" all stem from her human creator. Thus, it is safe to say that the consequences of her actions are Nathan's responsibility.

At the beginning of the film, Nathan refuses to reveal the mechanisms of Ava's and Kyoko's construction to Caleb. Eventually, he walks Caleb through his underground laboratory where scattered body parts spread out on pristine counters. In my view, the bodies Nathan builds are created not only in conformity with his liking but in his likeness. Before delivering a supposedly spontaneous routine to Oliver Cheatham's "Get Down Saturday Night," Nathan shouts: "I'm gonna tear up the fucking dance floor, dude" (00:58:54-00:58:55). Both the dance and Nathan's self-conceited belief in his supreme dancing skills are often overlooked as an inconsequential and somewhat ridiculous digression that provides temporary relief in the otherwise unsettling mood of the film in which even Caleb starts doubting his humanity. However, aside from humorously acknowledging that Nathan is an apt, although drunk, dancer, the scene also asserts that he is a very competent programmer. Put differently, the dance scene stresses that Kyoko must dance, that is, act and react, the way Nathan programmed her to. With Kyoko carefully replicating Nathan's every move, it is soon revealed that the routine is, if anything, pre-programmed by Nathan and that he is not only an arrogant individual preoccupied with satisfying his ridiculous impulses in between drowning in alcohol. The routine is obviously pre-determined and, most importantly, it reveals that Nathan is its architect, which, in turn, questions the authenticity of the cyborg's artificial "self." Balsamo writes that "both woman and cyborg are simultaneously symbolically and biologically produced" – while the "body" is one "interactional product," the "self" another (153). Specifically, both the cyborg's synthetic body, assembled at reassembled at another's will, and its artificial "self" exemplify its existence as the emblem of cultural construction. In this regard, Kyoko's and Ava's identity is a preexisting essence rather than a process.

Besides building hyper-sexualized bodies that, although unnatural, decidedly underline the naturalized sex-gender-sexuality dialectics, Nathan shapes and subsequently stimulates

both Kyoko's and Ava's "self." It can be argued that Nathan was testing Ava to see if she could cold-bloodedly take advantage of Caleb to help her escape: "Ava was a rat in a maze, and I gave her one way out. To escape, she'd have to use self-awareness, imagination, manipulation, sexuality, and she did" (01:24:53-01:25:05). By programming her sex, gender, and sexuality, Nathan manipulates her means of escape. For example, the cut-outs she uses to, in Butler's words, materialize as a "woman" and seduce Caleb, are the ones Nathan serves her. From the point of Butler's theory of performativity, Ava's body is reduced to a lifeless recipient of pre-given relations and the potential to perceive her body as a process, "a continual and incessant materializing of possibilities" ("Performative Acts" 521), remains utterly unrealized as its "possibilities" are predetermined and, most importantly, always materialize within a formerly restricted framework. The "essence" of femininity is frequently attached to the body that functions as an immediate indicator of one's difference. Still, the film suggests that Ava is powerless in that she cannot simply refuse her pre-imposed body, thus manipulating her own image. Her failure highlights the importance of Butler's argument according to which one must be "undone" in order to do oneself anew (*Undoing Gender* 100). Clearly, Ava cannot "undo" herself as her form is always already fixed, held for the pleasure of the two male protagonists. The two often watch Ava through the surveillance system as she sits passively in a chair or lies silently on the sofa, further dehumanizing her into a passive object of their greedy gaze. She is framed *for* them. Similarly, at the end of the film, Ava peels off pieces of another cyborg's skin, and takes an arm to replace her broken one, a floral dress, and a brown wig, adopting her creator's consumerist behavior in order to escape her captivity (Musap 410). Although she has the ability to (re)construct her body for the first time, she is limited by both the body parts and the clothing originally provided by Nathan. Although Ava can escape Nathan's underground facility and Caleb's supposedly innocent intentions, she cannot abandon her pre-imposed body. Accordingly, Ava is preprogrammed to conform to certain gendered archetypes that are, as argued in the introduction, still present in popular culture – she is either Nathan's *femme fatale* or Caleb's seductress posing as the innocently naive maiden in distress.[75] It can be said that Ava's only source of power comes

[75] Conventionally, the damsel in distress is a distinctly innocent young woman, often persecuted and/or confined by a familiar and/or familial antagonist until the arrival of a long-forgotten protagonist who liberates her through marriage. Conversely, the *femme fatale* is the damsel's definite antithesis, portrayed as a sexually desirable woman who coaxes men to indulge in danger, often causing their destruction. In his discussion of Fritz

from her ability to momentarily manipulate her own image. However, this power is always temporary. In the *Manifesto*, Haraway stresses that "[t]he machine is not an '*it*' to be animated, worshiped, and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment" (180). Thus, the cyborg's consciousness remains an extension of human experience. For example, Nathan tells Caleb that his biggest challenge was to create cyborgs that could imitate facial expressions. To gather data on personal and interpersonal interaction, he hacked the world's smartphones through Blue Book's servers. He offers a detailed description of Ava's mind: "I had to get away from the circuitry. I needed something that could arrange and rearrange on a molecular level but keep its form when required. Holding for memories. Shifting for thoughts" (00:37:44-00:37:56). According to Nathan, Ava's orb-like mind is wetware, while her software consists of Blue Book search engines. To him, these engines were essential in designing her mind because they revealed the mechanism of individual thought processes: "Impulse. Response. Fluid. Imperfect. Patterned. Chaotic" (00:38:36-00:38:50). Are not, then, the foundation of Ava's thought and behavioral processes the algorithm movements of the Blue Book's search engine, exemplifying Haraway's opinion on the machine being us?

After arguing that both Kyoko's and Ava's supposed sentience or, according to Balsamo's assessment, "self" is an extension of its human creator's experience, I aim at approaching the cyborg body from a similar, although unexplored, angle. In accordance with phenomenology's and human geography's assessment, the dissertation's introduction positioned place as a relational category, continuously constructed by individual actions and interpersonal interactions – an argument important to the interpretative analysis of the interrelation between places and selves. It negated the pre-existence of places, positioning

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Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Andreas Huyssen writes that cyborgs in the 18th century did not embody the scientist's preference for one of the two sexes, but that they were equally represented (qtd. in Musap 408). However, "as soon as the machine came to be perceived as a demonic, inexplicable threat and as a harbinger of chaos and destruction . . . writers began to imagine the *Maschinenmensch* as woman" (Huyssen qtd. in Musap 408). Ever since then, the cyborg "has been trapped within the virgin/vamp dichotomy" (Ibid.), portrayed as the damsel in distress or the *femme fatale*. In other words, the anxiety toward the unknowable female body is projected onto the feminized body of the cyborg, with male scientists exerting power onto her mechanical structure. The cyborgs thus conflate the correlation between the male fear of the woman's "unknowable" interiority and the fear of technology going out of control.

them as affective accumulations of both oneiric and, in my reading, non-oneiric content. More precisely, to paraphrase Butler, place is also a doing – it does not pre-exist the deed (*Gender Trouble* 34). If the body is, according to McDowell's aforementioned assessment, the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" and "malleability" pointing toward its continuous construction (34), it follows that it is, not unlike the house, transformed through the inscription of an individual's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. In my reading, the construction of body-as-place presupposes the inscription of content by (an)Other who, in turn, molds it into a singular shape.

As discussed, Balsamo defined the cyborg's body as a product of desires permeating one's unconsciousness (149). If Nathan is primarily concerned with creating so-called "sex-bots" or, better said, of bodies subjected to constant and consistent sexual abuse, it follows that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Balsamo's "unconscious desires" or, in my reading, of repressed instinctual impulses. According to Freud, an uncontrollable urge toward sexual intercourse conflicts with society's restraining influence. To achieve progress, "primitive impulses" (*Introductory Lectures* 47), of which the sexual one is the strongest, are sublimated toward asexual aims. If not, these primitive impulses demand satisfaction via sexual activities that divert the individual from following a "normal" path of copulation, either by extending pleasure beyond genitality or by creating new sexual aims as a result of "abnormal" lingering. Freud refers to the former perversions as "deviations in respect of the sexual object" ("Three Essays" 1465) and to the latter ones as "deviations in the form of the sexual aim" (1467) or, more precisely, as "inversions" (1477) because they displace the sexual object to an individual who is not a member of the opposite sex or to an inanimate object. In my view, Nathan's aforementioned decision to pre-determine the causality between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality, coupled with the constant construction and reconstruction of hyper-sexualized bodies to be abused and, accordingly, dismembered and discarded, implies that the assessment of artificial intelligence only conceals his intention of sexually satisfying his instinctual impulses.

Moreover, due to the constant construction of cyborgs, assessed as possessing artificial intelligence, analyzing the uncanny is seemingly straightforward. After all, one can connect it to Jentsch's postulation proposed in "On the Psychology of the Uncanny" (1906). Specifically, the uncanny is related to intellectual uncertainty or, more precisely, to a doubt as

to "whether an apparently animate being is really alive" (qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 125). Cyborgs are caught in a limbo-like state characterized by a lack of finality – are they simply automated, or do they display sentient autonomy? In *Ex Machina,* this intellectual uncertainty can be interpreted as an intersecting identity crisis with cyborgs performing as humans and humans doubting whether they are cyborgs. While the argument may apply to Caleb who, doubting his humaneness, cuts himself to see whether he bleeds "real" blood, it is not to Nathan. The body is, in line with McDowell's postulation, the place *par excellence,* thus transformed through the inscription of an individual's non-oneiric content. If bodies-as-places are affective accumulations, it follows that the non-oneiric content is contained as their constant property. By reappropriating Freud's theory of the return of the repressed, Vidler is to underline that the uncanny is "the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream" (7). At the end of *Ex Machina,* the seemingly subservient Kyoko stabs Nathan in the back. She touches his face while staring into his eyes, simulating his behavior before he would abuse her in the past. Namely, the moment Kyoko touches Nathan's face she represents that which cannot be otherwise represented. Besides demonstrating an unsettling slippage between the dialectics of the inside and outside, the uncanny portrays a psychological play of doubling in which "the other is . . . experienced as a replica of the self, all the more fearsome because apparently the same" (Vidler 3). As a projection of Nathan's "self," Kyoko compels him to confront his behavior that is, to a large extent, directed and delineated by libidinal desires. Therefore, the uncanny is affected by the rupture of Nathan's repressed instinctual impulses on the surface of her synthetic body.

After Nathan knocks off Kyoko's jaw, Ava pulls the knife out of his back and stabs him, slowly and mechanically. Staggering down the hallway he utters his final words: "Fucking unreal" (01:32:02-01:32:03). Initially, it seems that both Kyoko and Ava acquire autonomous agencies. The comment clearly emphasizes that the nigh-omnipotent, God-like Nathan is certainly confused by the cyborgs' "unprogrammed" conduct. However, if the docile body, in the end, transcends its owner it is only because it acts and reacts according to pre-programmed patterns. If Ava is a complex network, equipped with means of escape such as manipulation, why couldn't she also be equipped with the potentiality for committing a crime or, in this case, murder? Aside from murdering Nathan, Ava also manipulates Caleb in order to escape, eventually leaving him imprisoned within the facility. However, if, in line

with Haraway's argument, cyborgs are extensions of their creators (180), then the only monster of the narrative is Nathan himself. Accordingly, artificial bodies are not monstrous because they mark the dissolution of the "ontological hygiene" of humanity, that is, the dissipation of the Western dualisms systematically separating human, machine, and animal (Graham 11; 54). If anything, because of being adjacent to humanity, artificial bodies invite the violence of initial inscription of instinctual impulses and ensuing physical exploitation, exposing, in turn, the moral monstrosity of *Ex Machina*'s human creator. As noted in the chapter's introduction, one of the persistent ambiguities in interpreting what Foucault has called a "moral monster" is that such a criminal both breaks society's laws and stands outside them (92). Secluded in his far-off, subterranean, and windowless gender factory, Nathan clearly stands "outside" of society's laws, free to do whatever he wishes. Under the pretense of investigating artificial intelligence, this "bad" scientist abuses the artificial bodies for nothing more than his sexual gratification.

4.2.Thomas Berger's *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* (2004)

Following the summary of Thomas Berger's novel, *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*, the subchapter seeks to examine whether Phyllis's synthetic body, repeatedly reassembled at Ellery's will and whim, exemplifies her existence as a construction. As will be argued, Ellery builds a hyper-sexualized body that conforms to his conception of physical perfection. He shapes and stimulates Phyllis' personality, humiliates her, and reduces her *modus operandi* to static subordination. Precisely, Phyllis is projected with a series of preconceived patterns of repetition that, as Judith Butler's argues, define discrete and internally coherent identities (*Gender Trouble* xxxiii). These patterns assert her as a "proper" woman, perverting Donna Haraway's promise of a post-gender (dis)embodiment. After arguing that Phyllis's supposed sentience or, according to Anne Balsamo's assessment, her "self" (153) is an extension of its human creator's experience, the subchapter intends on interpreting the cyborg's body as a spatial construct. In line with Linda McDowell's aforementioned assessment of the body being the place *par excellence*, its "malleability" and "plasticity" stressing it being subjected to the process of continuous construction and reconstruction (34), the subchapter aims at arguing that it is transformed through the inscription of Ellery's non-oneiric content. Precisely, if Ellery is primarily concerned with

creating so-called "sex-bots" or, better said, of bodies subjected to constant sexual abuse, it follows that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Balsamo's "unconscious desires" (149) or, in my reading, of repressed instinctual impulses, as per Sigmund Freud's postulation. Therefore, the uncanny is not endangered by "intellectual uncertainty" (Jentsch qtd. in Freud, "The Uncanny" 125) but by the desublimation of the supposedly sublimated instinctual impulses. Ultimately, the subchapter will seek to underline that the cyborg's body is not monstrous in itself – it is the human creator who, instead of perceiving the potentiality of a technologically-assisted de-materialization, subjects the body to endless sexual exploitation exposing, in turn, his moral monstrosity.

Thomas Berger's *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*[76] follows the life of one Ellery Pierce – an animatronic designer and programmer who is completely dissatisfied with his love life. His dissatisfaction stems from the fact that he cannot find a woman with whom he can have a lasting relationship. Ellery is obviously unaware that relationships are mutual and thus both partners are responsible for them, but he does not blame himself. He blames his mother for spoiling him. In particular, he finds fault with all of his female companions as soon as they assert their dominance by disrespecting him and contradicting him: "Eventually the most amiable would turn sarcastic, make aspersions on his tastes, oppose his opinions, disrespect his judgments" (Berger 12-13). Discouraged, he decides to construct the perfect one from scratch. As Ellery explains, "The artificial woman would naturally be able to perform *every* function, but sex was the least of what Pierce looked for in his made-to-order model" (11; emphasis added). Phyllis is the epitome of patriarchal domesticity; she is programmed to fulfill Ellery's wishes and whims – she does not offer any opinions of her own, remains silent when ordered, habitually performs programmed stock phrases to please him, cleans the house, washes the laundry, and prepares dinner. Therefore, far from being a promising *tabula rasa*, Phyllis has been endowed with "appropriate" qualities that constitute the category of the "proper" woman.

In spite of Ellery's above-cited comment, Phyllis's construction as an attractive woman becomes the principal aspect of her characterization. It is her appearance that enables

[76] At the time of writing the dissertation, there were no published articles on Berger's *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*.

her to eventually leave Ellery and seek employment as a prostitute, a dancer at a striptease club, and an actress in pornographic films. According to the aforementioned theorists (Balsamo, 2000; Cranny-Francis, 2000; Toffoletti, 2007), Phyllis's construction becomes symbolic to an extreme extent of the many ways in which non-anthropomorphic, that is, artificially built bodies, bolster traditional binaries. Although Ellery argues that physical appearance is insignificant, he dedicates plenty of time to building Phyllis's body. Specifically, he constructs her as a woman in her early twenties – she has a "sleek" body (24), an "exquisite" (21) behind, "satin-smooth" limbs that "would never need depilation or known scars" (23), and "breasts of the shape and size he believed perfect, the nose and mouth and silken chestnut hair, the poreless skin, the smooth slender thighs, the curve from waist to hip, the elongated and very narrow shape of foot by which he had always been fascinated" (19). Deprived of her own corporeal reality, Phyllis is positioned as the pure object of Ellery's sexual desire and, thus, subject of nothing. Ellery even admits that he was attracted to Phyllis in an immediate way: "He undressed her of the jeans and sweater . . . and tore away the sparkling white underwear with one hand while ripping off his own clothes with the other. Never had he known desire of this intensity" (22). Thus, it is safe to say that Phyllis is transformed into an axiom of femininity. As discussed earlier, Haraway does propose the notion of a "monstrous world without gender" (181) but does not elaborate on how it can be realized. Therefore, Balsamo concludes that contemporary cyborgs are still endowed with either typically female and/or male traits (151). Instead of subverting or, at least, confusing the confounding categories of human/machine and artificial/non-artificial, Ellery's creation clearly reinstates regressive stereotypes. Still, although the novel does not necessarily introduce an innovative approach to seeing the artificial body, it exposes the naturalized notions attached to femininity as a cultural construction. In this way, to paraphrase Susan Short, the construction of synthetic cyborgs helps challenge the authenticity of the very category of "woman" (*Cyborg Cinema and Contemporary Subjectivity* 83).

For example, although Ellery explains that his main aim was not to build a mere "sex-bot," he devotes a lot of attention to not only building but perfecting Phyllis's body. Her interior consists of conduits that circulate oil in order to create the illusion of warmth. At the very beginning of the novel, after she kisses him with her warm lips, he feels an immediate sexual attraction. Besides being devoted to achieving an adequate degree of bodily temperature, Ellery is also preoccupied with producing seamless skin texture. Precisely,

Phyllis's skin emerges as Ellery's fundamental fixation at the very beginning of the novel (17; 23; 25). The obsessive necessity to produce a poreless, smooth, velvet-like texture emphasizes that Ellery believes such skin to be one of the most important traits that constitute a "true" woman. To paraphrase Jack Halberstam, it can be said that this synthetic skin is transformed into identity itself rather than the surface of Phyllis's personality (*Skin Shows* 176). It becomes the basic element of her genetic or, better said, generic gender makeup. Phyllis's skin does not materialize, as Halberstam mentions in relation to *Silence of the Lambs*' (1991) Buffalo Bill or Mary Shelley's creature, as the stitched monstrosity of surfaces – it is not uncomfortable to wear, that is, it is not too tight, transparent, nor sewn together from stolen body parts belonging to deceased humans and animals (1). At the same time, as an animated composition of artificial components, Phyllis serves as the creature's successor, albeit not as a progenitor of its freakishly unnatural physicality. Achieved after Ellery's arduous attempts, Phyllis's skin persists as the signifier of the proper, pristine body. He even explains how her "skin is flawless. That might not be completely realistic but it's a personal taste of mine" (Berger 29). Specifically, the skin is the physical boundary *par excellence* that functions as a prerequisite for being classified within the category of humanity. After all, Halberstam argues that "someone's skin . . . precisely forms the surface through which inner identities emerge and upon which external readings of identity leave their impression" (141). Aside from devoting ample attention to devising human-like skin texture that could be easily replaced when impaired, Ellery preserves Phyllis's intelligibility by establishing a causal coherence among the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality.

As argued in the introduction, to avoid being admonished as a logical impossibility, one must make sure that one's gender flows from one's sex and that one's practices of sexual desire follow from one's sex and gender. As Ellery explains: "you can't start with a sexless dummy and then at a certain point install breasts and a vulva and call it female. It has to be a woman from the earliest conception, from the first sketches" (61). Not unlike *Ex Machina*'s Nathan, Ellery pre-programs Phyllis's sex, gender, and sexuality. Being built and not born, Phyllis lacks a sex-specific essence. Still, Ellery inserts into her an artificial vagina to enable her *every* function (11; emphasis added). Ellery's comment also emphasizes that the category of gender is an external attribute engineered onto Phyllis's exteriority. Thus, it can be argued that Phyllis's sexed body is built as such due to the existing perception of polarized gender expressions. Precisely, to conform to the cultural conception of femininity, Phyllis is

constructed as a very attractive young woman. In line with Butler's anti-essentialist argument, "one is a woman . . . to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame" (*Gender Trouble* xi). Accordingly, aside from assigning Phyllis a sex-specific essence and gender, Ellery preprograms her sexual desire or lack thereof. First of all, Phyllis was programmed to please in a particular order. Ellery explains how he "pressed his lips to hers, which triggered her to give him the tongue and put gentle but importunate fingers into his crotch" (Berger 22). Furthermore, her lack of sexual desire is evident in Ellery's explanation according to which Phyllis's extramarital chastity was only due to him because it was but an absence of sexual desire that kept her out of other men's beds (12). Still, normative desire is necessary to avoid ambiguity and generate the appearance of a naturalistic necessity. In line with Butler's postulation, the heterosexualization of desire establishes an explicit binary between the asymmetrically antithetical markers of "feminine" and "masculine" that are asserted as "expressive attributes" of "male" and "female" (*Gender Trouble* 24). Otherwise, as argued on the example of *Ex Machina*, Phyllis could not qualify as "human."

Moreover, her sexuality or, more precisely, sexual desire can only ever be stimulated by Ellery: "He swept her up in her arms . . . and bore her into the bedroom, lowered her to the bed, and, leaning, pressed his lips to hers, which triggered her to give him the tongue and put gentle but importunate fingers into his crotch" (Berger 19). Although Ellery can "trigger" Phyllis's physical reactions, which mirror his ardor, she can only ever respond with programmed stock phrases such as "God, how I want you Ellery" (20) that, in turn, endanger his self-esteem. Therefore, Ellery decides to properly furnish Phyllis with all of the "appropriate" attributes he sought in the perfect woman before attempting sexual intercourse again. Ellery's comment emphasizes that Phyllis's sexless body that has been sexed, gendered, and assigned with specific sexuality is merely a passive medium onto which meanings are incessantly inscribed (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 12). Analogously to *Ex Machina*, these categories are thus nothing more than tools through which the male scientist naturalizes the notions of masculine versus feminine. They are not a "promising" apparatus through which such categories could be deconstructed and denaturalized.

Butler argues that, analogously to the body that must be constantly and consistently reiterated through performative acts that reproduce it, subject construction is not a singular act but "a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary,

fixity, and surface we call matter" (*Bodies that Matter* xviii). More precisely, matter signifies both materiality and meaningfulness. Accordingly, Ellery does not only build Phyllis from artificial body parts, batteries, and synthetic skin but, by programming her sex, gender, and sexuality, constructs her "self," which she, in turn, performs to produce the illusion of a stable surface. Namely, the "self" is always already a doing that, to paraphrase Butler, preexist the deed of production (*Gender Trouble* 34). Precisely, it is a performative effect of a pre-given essence. And, during the dinner party, which functions as a Turing Test for Phyllis to pass as his wife, she performs, in Ellery's words, "spectacularly well" (Berger 40). Not unlike *Ex Machina*'s Nathan then, Ellery reduces Phyllis's identity to a normative ideal – she is, after all, a *man's* idea of a woman. As Ellery explains: "She will define herself by her connection with a man. She will be weak-willed, dependent, gentle clinging, anxious only to serve, uncertain, devoid of conviction, frightened of challenges" (112). Clearly, Phyllis's construed identity invalidates the importance of the nature versus nurture debate. When explaining how she failed as a sex-phone operator because she could not arouse the client and then periodically curb his arousal, Phyllis says that "she was by nature, *that is by design*, inclined to a mode of operation unsympathetic to delay" (99; emphasis added). Since the cyborg is designed and not born, it can only ever be nurtured.

Eventually, Ellery realizes that both his neighbors' significant others are Other – Janet Hallstrom introduces Tyler as an artificial automaton she bought on eBay, while Ray belonged to Cliff Pulsifer's former partner. After the dinner, Phyllis delivers a powerful punch to Janet, and Tyler seizes Ellery to throw him off the terrace. At first, it seems as if both Phyllis and Tyler have acquired the capacity to act consciously exhibiting, in turn, subjective sentience. Indeed, Ellery is certainly confused by Phyllis's "unprogrammed" behavior. However, Janet argues against their conscious awareness: "I found that even in a malfunction I always have the upper hand. He talks of killing me, but it's necessarily just talking. He's incapable of doing anything I haven't ordered him to do" (46). Although Tyler and Ray are introduced as "finished" products, both Janet and Cliff explain how they can only ever act and react according to pre-programmed patterns, reducing their behavior to a "faulty relay" (Ibid.). Afterward, they also state that these cyborgs can become *anything* one wishes them to be. After the dinner, Phyllis explains the reason behind her bizarre behavior – namely, she wanted everyone to leave so that they could engage in intercourse. She then leads him to the bed, disrobes him, and ties his wrists and ankles to the bed stand. Not finding Phyllis's idea

sexually stimulating, Ellery urges her to untie him. She refuses, saying that she will leave him to pursue a career in show business to which Ellery replies: "You're not some Frankenstein creation of organic materials, with a brain that revolts against its maker. You're an electronic and mechanical personage. You'll need recharging any minute now" (53). Unlike Frankenstein's creature, Phyllis is incapable of independent thought processes. For example, as Phyllis was programmed to reflect Ellery's sexual desire, and not to autonomously provoke it, she fails at finding employment as a prostitute, a dancer at a striptease club, a sex-phone operator, an actress on live voyeur television, and in pornographic films. Phyllis simply "could not understand why men who wanted to look at naked women needed all the unnecessary hocus-pocus attending what should have been the simplest of events" (72). Still, although Phyllis cannot understand the mechanisms of sexual desire, she finally discovers that it functions, to paraphrase *Ex Machina*'s Nathan, as the instigator of interaction between individuals. However, by not integrating the best elements of both human and artificial intelligence into his creation, Ellery eliminates Phyllis's potential to think of herself as more than a physically attractive currency to be circulated among men. Put differently, she can only ever see her body as being connected to the act of sexual consumption and exploitation.

Eventually, Phyllis finds employment as an apprentice at Howard Kidd's private theater. After a series of menial tasks, she stages an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. She decides to incorporate overt sexual acts into the play, portraying Lady Macbeth as a dominatrix who ties her husband to the bed stand and flogs his behind with a multi-tiled whip, which launches her career into stardom. Because of her decision to appear nude in numerous films, she soon becomes a box-office smash. As Butler argues, "the 'coherence' and 'continuity' of 'the person' are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility" (*Gender Trouble* 23). Not unlike *Ex Machina*'s Ava then, Phyllis learns that the coherence between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality functions as a normative prerequisite for maintaining the illusion of one's identity. Precisely, the illusion prevents the appearance of discontinuous genders that would hinder one's passing as a human. Therefore, to sustain the continuity of the category of "woman," Phyllis repeatedly performs: "I am an actress. . . everything I've ever done has been acting. It's necessarily all I *can* do" (Berger 178). As argued in the previous subchapter, the basis of Ava's thought processes consists of the continual, onward movement of the Blue Book's search engine. As for Phyllis, she can choose from a stock of pre-programmed phrases

and/or memorize new ones. Accordingly, she is equipped with the ability to acquire and record information instantaneously, from indirect as well as personal experience. Therefore, Ellery sees her attack after the dinner party not as an act of inherent sentience but as learned behavior: "What you're doing now comes from the movies you've undoubtedly watched in between the cooking shows. The characters are poor models for you" (44). Moreover, Phyllis's decision to leave Ellery was inspired by soap-opera housewives whom she had been studying and who, weary of their daily routine, decided to pursue a career of their own. After all, Ellery repeatedly asserts that she is a machine without a proper *self* (165; emphasis added), incapable of sentiments such as sympathy and gratitude (51). After their reunion, Ellery acknowledges that Phyllis had changed considerably. However,

> Given the nature of her being, it could not even be said that she had grown, human-style, from what she once had been to what she was today, as a girl becomes a woman. She had rather evolved, like successive models of an automobile, from Model T to Lincoln Town car, or like the telephone, from Bell's crude experiment to today's miniature portable instrument. She had not matured; she had undergone a series of modifications. (150)

It is evident from Ellery's explanation that Phyllis has a familiar presence; analogously to *Ex Machina*'s Ava, she is asserted as a technological achievement, a mere household appliance that has been modified over time to replace the older version. As Ellery explains, Phyllis has not followed the natural progression from being a girl to becoming a woman. She has simply been modified, updated to a newer, more successful version. Balsamo claims that the cyborg is simultaneously symbolically and biologically produced – the body being one interactional product and the "self" another (153). Phyllis's synthetic body that is repeatedly reassembled whenever Ellery wishes so, and her synthetic "self," exemplify her existence as a construction. Ellery builds a hyper-sexualized body that conforms to his conception of physical perfection. By preprogramming Phyllis to perform only "simpleminded functions" (Berger 41), it is evident that Ellery is not primarily interested in producing an intricate persona. Analogously to Ava's, Phyllis's body is reduced to a lifeless recipient of pre-given relations and the potential to perceive her body as a process, "a continual and incessant materializing of possibilities" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 521), remains utterly unrealized as its "possibilities" always already materialize within a formerly restricted framework.

Instead of illustrating that there is nothing natural about an appropriate body, Phyllis's potential for revealing the fragility of these fixed norms is neglected; she is an "it" to be either inscribed or emptied at Ellery's wish and whim. This is best observable in instances in which Ellery disassembles Phyllis's body into compact parts and packs them in a bag to transfer her from one place to another. Therefore, it can be said that he shapes and subsequently stimulates her "self," reducing her potential to passive subordinance. Not unlike Nathan then, Ellery creates Phyllis not only in conformity with his liking but in his likeness. After she attacks Janet at the beginning of the novel, Ellery says: "Insofar as she had any existence beyond the plastics and metals that made up her body, Phyllis was, necessarily, *himself*" (Berger 50; emphasis added). After their reunion, Phyllis also admits: "I understand least when you speak of your*self*. I know I don't have one, but if I did, it would be yours, would it not?" (165). Throughout the novel, Phyllis readily recognizes herself to be designed, not born (83), without identity (81), and incapable of feeling (157). Analogously to Ava then, Phyllis can only ever function within the framework initially designed by Ellery. She is sentient insofar as she learns to uphold the foundational illusion of identity through reiterated performance. However, it is Ellery who, at the end of the novel, incapacitates her and not vice-versa, reducing her supposed sentience to a software "bug" (282). He simply turns her off, like a small household appliance. Elaborating on Haraway's explanation that the machine's physicality and mental processes are undeniably ours (180), the subchapter contends that the cyborg's sentience clearly remains an extension of its human creator's experience. After arguing that Phyllis's supposed sentience or, according to Balsamo's assessment, "self" is an extension of its human creator's experience, the chapter aims at approaching the cyborg's body as a spatial construct.

Precisely, the body-as-place postulation is observable in Ellery's detailed description: "Her throat was a waterproofed tube that debouched into a collection chamber in the abdominal area. She was capable of eating real food, even masticating dense meats, all of which descended to the same chamber, which could be removed for emptying through swingaway buttocks, hinged inconspicuously" (17). Namely, Phyllis's body is neatly systematized into chambers that can contain both concrete food and fluids. The tubes leading from these chambers guide the content to the central abdominal area that is connected to the buttocks and can be accessed to extricate excess waste. By methodically summarizing Phyllis's spatial topography, Ellery collapses both the "body" and "place" into a single entity.

Per phenomenology's and human geography's assessment, place is a relational category, continuously constructed by individual interactions, thus invalidating its pre-existence and positioning it as an affective accumulation of both oneiric, and in my reading, non-oneiric content. As the body is, according to McDowell's assertion, the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" or, more precisely, "malleability" stressing it being subjected to continuous construction (34), it follows that it is similarly transformed through the inscription of individual content. Balsamo construed the cyborg's body as a product of fears and desires permeating one's unconsciousness (149). Although Ellery initially argues that his intention was not to build a consumable commodity, explaining that he was no more of a pervert than Phyllis was a "sex doll" (Berger 91) or a "mere sex-object" (191), he eventually admits that the ability to engage in intercourse was an important component of Phyllis's construction. Phyllis even asks him: "Isn't that why you've built me?" to which Ellery responds: "I don't know. It may have been" (193). Later on, he even states that he was "capable of seeing her as essentially the realization of a masturbatory fantasy" (196). Analogously to *Ex Machina*'s Nathan, if Ellery is primarily concerned with creating "sex-bots," subjected to sexual abuse, it follows that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Balsamo's "unconscious desires" (149) or, in my reading, of repressed instinctual impulses.

According to Freud's theory of repression, the process of one's sexual development entails the sublimation of "love-objects," present in previous sexual phases such as the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital ones. Conversely, there are two possibilities for persons who remain attached to these "love-objects" or who are driven to substitute-formations. While the first outcome is perversion, which results in a person seeking "alternative" sexual objects, the second possibility is neurosis; a conflict arises in which alternative sexual objects and situations or, or "repudiated libidinal trends," are simultaneously present and "arouse displeasure in one part of the personality, so that a veto is imposed which makes the new method of satisfaction impossible" (*Introductory Lectures* 220). Not unlike Nathan then, Ellery's impulses are, in line with Freud's theory of repression, referred to as "perversions" ("Three Essays" 1477) because they displace the sexual object to someone, or something, other than a member of the opposite sex.

However, unlike *Ex Machina*, there is a possible explanation for Ellery's substitute-formation. According to Freud, during the "normal" or "ideal" non-neurotic development of

the Oedipus complex, "the authority of the father . . . is introjected into the ego," where it "forms the nucleus of the super-ego," perpetuating the prohibition of incest and securing the ego from "the return of the libidinal object-cathexis" ("The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" 176-177). Therefore, the son's attraction to his mother is replaced with an attraction to other women, with the son developing an affection for the former. However, if the "libidinal object-cathexes" of the Oedipus complex are merely repressed and not destroyed, they will persist in "the latency period" (177), eventually manifesting their effect. At the beginning of the novel, Ellery explains how: "he bore no responsibility for having been reared by a single mother who adored and spoiled her only child, a child who was therefore led to expect much the same treatment from the other examples of the female sex he would encounter after leaving the nest" (Berger 11). Precisely, although he argues against Phyllis being a substitute-mother, he admits: "Phyllis was an admirable surrogate for a woman. Indeed, she did a better job at it than any real one with whom he had associated, except of course his mother" (31). As stated, the successful resolution of the Oedipus complex presupposes that the son will start identifying with his father and forgo the attraction for his mother. Because of the absence of the father figure who is, according to Freud, of utmost importance in individual development, Ellery remains mother-fixated. Even Phyllis observes that Ellery is overly sensitive on the subject of his mother (201).

Finally, due to the constant presence of an artificial amalgamation assessed as possessing artificial intelligence, analyzing the uncanny is seemingly straightforward. Contrary to Jentsch's postulation, even though the cyborg deconstructs the discrete and delineated configuration of "humaneness," the uncanny does not arise as a result of an intersecting identity crisis with cyborgs performing as humans and humans doubting whether they are cyborgs. After all, although individuals notice that there is something slightly "off" with Phyllis, they never question her artificiality. In my understanding, the uncanny is thus not a property of Phyllis's body *per se*. Reappropriating Freud's theory of repression, Vidler is to propose that a particular place not only reflects one's present self but one's repressed self, affecting the disturbing ambiguity of the uncanny (79). If Phyllis's body is built through the investment of instinctual and Oedipal impulses, her artificial "birth," in line with Vidler's argument, reflects Ellery's non-oneiric content. Namely, it is the reemergence of Ellery's repressed instinctual impulses on the surface of her body that endangers the unsettling slippage between the familiar and the supposedly unfamiliar. Furthermore, Phyllis's supple

figure is “equipped” with an exquisite behind, flawless skin, velvety hair, sensual hazel eyes, and delicate pink lips. Phyllis is not monstrous because her body lies beyond cultural categories that determine one’s legibility (Cohen 57) or because its definite artificiality demonstrates the dissolution of the “ontological hygiene” of humanity, that is, the dissipation of the Western dualisms systematically separating human, machine, and animal (Graham 11; 54). Although Ellery compares her to Shelley’s creature that has been established as the archetypal progenitor of the monstrous body that is both manufactured and given birth to, Phyllis is not one of its offspring. After all, it is because of her human-like body and her permanent performance of sex, gender, and sexuality that she is classified within the category of humanity.

During her conversation with Ellery, Phyllis asks “What is Hitler?” to which he responds, “the epitome of evil” (Berger 177). Ellery elaborates by explaining that Phyllis was not programmed with the capability to comprehend the concept because “being evil” cannot be universally assessed, and animatronic personae have limitations insofar as they operate linearly. Specifically, they cannot feel pain nor pride (27), they “have no sense of irony” or sarcasm and “therefore never joke and never lie” to others (29), and, most importantly, they are morally neutral (149). Phyllis substantiates her neutrality by saying: “I never break the law if I know what it is . . . That’s the way I was made” (92). Accordingly, Phyllis cannot be positioned within the physically natural/unnatural nor the psychologically moral/amoral binary because her body facilitates cultural intelligibility, and, as Ellery emphasizes, she is “morally neutral.” He substantiates the argument by saying that “*you* cannot be immoral. If you do something that people consider evil, the blame would be on me” (180).

After her success with the talk-show “Phyllis from the Heart,” both Phyllis and Ellery get invited by the president of the United States to a dinner party at the White House. After the dinner, the aforementioned animatronic Tyler Hallstrom attempts to assassinate the president. However, Ellery explains that Tyler’s act was not morally motivated but pre-programmed. Tyler’s change in behavior was brought about by the implementation of brand-new attributes (259). Specifically, the attempt was staged, and the Secret Service agents chose Tyler so that they could shoot *it* down with impunity (222; emphasis added). At first, Phyllis declares that she has nothing against humans since it was a human who created her. However, after becoming president-elect she threatens to kill anyone who opposes her, saying: “I won’t

have to take shit from anybody . . . I'll be in charge" (271). Realizing that her ruinous decisions would ultimately be *his* doing, Ellery decides to deactivate her temporarily, that is until he can fix the software bugs out of an otherwise "winning design" (283). Finally, Phyllis is simply shut down and, in a way, withdrawn from a place of opportunities, with the novel's ending emphasizing the final negation of her supposed sentience.

Accordingly, artificial bodies invite the violence of the initial inscription of instinctual impulses and ensuing physical exploitation, exposing, in turn, Ellery's moral monstrosity. In line with Foucault, the moral monster is no longer a natural manifestation of the unnatural but is characterized by the irregularity of interests that motivate their conduct (74.). This "irregularity of interests" becomes discernible with Ellery's decision to build a "sex-bot" that, at the same time, serves as a substitute mother who would take care of him and never leave him. Conversely, the attachment to Phyllis *per se* is disproved by Ellery's dismissive comment: "It would not be criminal for Pierce to neglect, discard, or even destroy the creature he has made, in any of which circumstances he would be guilty *only* of wasting much of his life" (Berger 15; emphasis added). As mentioned in the introduction, Foucault has argued that the "moral monster" breaks the law while at the same time standing "outside the law" (92). Secluded in his, to paraphrase Shelley, secret workshop of filthy creation and in his far-off countryside cottage, Ellery stands "outside" of societal laws. Under the pretense of creating an adequate companion, this "bad" scientist abuses the artificial body, to paraphrase Butler, as a passive site of physical exploitation (*Undoing Gender* 34). Moreover, insofar as Phyllis is an identityless extension of her human creator, her monstrous behavior, or, better said, her turning against Ellery, can only ever be a pre-programmed or, in the context of the novel, a learned behavior. Although we could argue that Phyllis's behavior is replicated from watching other individuals and not Ellery, the ability to learn such behavior was programmed by him, making it his responsibility. Therefore, by locating the cyborg within the body-as-place dialectics, it is possible to perceive its potential sentience as always already restricted by the initial inscription of its creator. Similarly, the cyborg's supposedly monstrous behavior necessarily originates, to paraphrase Haraway, from "within" (180). However, since the cyborg is a construction without a "within," the blame, as Ellery so perceptively discloses, is on *him*.

4.3.Conclusion – Artificial Bodies as Sites of Being Done to

The cyborg might be without an origin story, but its body is not a static signifier. Its contemporary portrayals circulate as possibilities and potentialities. To draw from McDowell, bodies do matter, but their meaning may constantly change (35). Since the cyborg is a temporal snapshot of continually shifting constituents, Cranny-Francis argues against analyzing its body in isolation but focusing instead on its contextual representations (160). Accordingly, by analyzing Garland's film *Ex Machina* and Berger's novel *Adventures of the Artificial Woman,* the two subchapters stressed that the processes of inscription contour both the cyborg's physical exterior and its interior or, in Balsamo's words, its "self" (153). By building bodies bound by sexual desire, both Nathan and Ellery betray their initial intention of assessing artificial intelligence and/or creating an adequate companion. Ava's, Kyoko's, and Phyllis's function is not to test new technologies or the technological limits of consciousness but to build the ideal woman from scratch for the selfish male to consume at his will and whim. Instead of enabling a de-materialization that displaces the dualisms of inherently naturalized identities (Haraway 171), technology is employed as a tool to engender consumable commodities, conflating both Nathan's and Ellery's desire to create and copulate, reinforcing, in turn, regressive stereotypes of contemporary cyborgs being subjected to constant sexual abuse. After all, it seems as if Nathan's often-cited claim, "Ava's body is a good one" (*Ex Machina* 01:05:53-01:05:55), applies to both narratives, negating the alleged importance of ontological assessment in favor of physical exploitation. All of the artificial bodies that were supposed to present or, at best, break down the intricate interplay between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality, are humiliated to being nothing more than hunks of plastic with highly functional holes. Thus, it can be said that Ava's, Kyoko's, and Phyllis's synthetic bodies symbolize "the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet . . . the final appropriation of women's bodies in a masculinist orgy of war" (Haraway 154). These cyborgs can leave the "orgy of war" only by leaving their bodies behind. Still, they cannot achieve liberation by simply manipulating the structures that have established them within their essentialized, that is, culturally comprehensible bodies.

Besides building hyper-sexualized bodies that, although unnatural, naturalize the causal determinism between the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality, both Nathan and Ellery simultaneously shape and stimulate Ava's, Kyoko's, and Phyllis's "selves." Therefore,

the subchapters argued against the cyborg's supposed sentience, inferring that they always already act and react according to pre-programmed patterns, remaining an extension rather than an heir apparent. Being built and not born, these bodies point toward them being produced and not self-subjected to the process of becoming. They become their sex, gender, and sexuality but that "becoming" is done by another. Analogously, their selves are, to paraphrase Butler, also a doing that preexists the deed of production (*Gender Trouble* 34). Thus, although the two narratives undoubtedly accentuate the constructedness and the misogynistic undercurrents of the very category of "woman" (Creed 153), they still portray them as passive objects or projections of man's unconscious desires. In other words, it is safe to say that the two narratives do not fulfill what Haraway has called the promise of monsters.

Finally, following McDowell's aforementioned assessment of the body as the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" and "malleability" pointing toward its continuous construction (34), the two subchapters argued that the body is transformed through the inscription of an individual's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. In this regard, technologically assisted bodies can be read as spatially variable constructs, repeatedly reiterated through human interaction. They are typified by liminality, located at the threshold between being static and offering opportunities to become "otherwise." Still, these cyborgs cannot become "otherwise" through their own agency but through the male scientist's technological manipulations. The denial of different body possibilities on the part of the male scientist points toward a specific type of violence in itself. Therefore, the cyborg is humiliated to being nothing more than a container, an object of masculine desire. It does not disrupt binary codifications as a being with a multiplicity of identity options available. According to Butler's postulation, the cyborg's bodily contours are "clearly marked as the taken-for-granted ground or surface upon which gender significations are inscribed, a mere facticity devoid of value" (*Gender Trouble* 176). Therefore, it can be argued that the bodies populating the two narratives are an "it," diminished to a thing to be either inscribed or emptied, a "facility" as Butler argues in the citation above. Since both Nathan and Ellery are primarily concerned with creating so-called "sex-bots" or, better said, bodies subjected to constant sexual abuse, it follows that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Balsamo's "unconscious desires" (149). Precisely, her postulation allows for the analysis of the cyborg's body as, according to Vidler's reappropriation of Freud, the representation of repressed content (79) or, in my reading, of instinctual impulses, interpreted as either deviation in respect to the sexual object,

as in Nathan's case, or unresolved Oedipal impulses, as in Ellery's case. Therefore, the uncanny is not endangered by intellectual uncertainty but by the desublimation of the supposedly sublimated instinctual impulses.

The subchapters then stressed that the cyborg's body is not monstrous because it is spatialized outside of cultural categories that determine one's legibility (Cohen 57) or because its artificiality demonstrates the dissolution of the "ontological hygiene" of humanity, that is, the dissipation of the Western dualisms systematically separating human, machine, and animal (Graham 11; 54). Namely, Ava, Kyoko, and Phyllis perform in accordance with culturally intelligible codes, consistently passing as "human." However, because of being non-human, the cyborg invites the violence of initial inscription and ensuing physical exploitation under the pretense of conducting scientific research, exposing, in turn, the moral monstrosity of Garland's and Berger's human creators. Therefore, these two case studies show that the true monster is not characterized by artificial skin but by the "appropriate" skin that signifies normalcy, beneath which both Nathan and Ellery masquerade. Invoking the "am-I-the-true-monster-or-merely-the-monster-maker" paranoia acutely present in Shelley's *Frankenstein* that served as an inspiration to the chapter's introduction, the case studies stress the fragility of the human/monster fixity, proposing the idea that the Other is, perhaps, none other than the human scientist himself.

5. Non-place

The notion of non-place, initially referred to in Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness* (1976), was extensively elaborated in Marc Augé's influential *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1992). Although Augé acknowledged its importance almost three decades ago, it consistently eludes critical engagement in the context of popular culture.[77] As has been stated, the dissertation's primary intention is to acknowledge and discuss the existence of an interrelation between places and articulations of monstrosity. To inquire into this interrelation in the context of non-places, the chapter's tentative theoretical framework will draw from both Relph's and Augé's considerable theoretical contributions. Although the places and non-places under discussion are fictional representations that do not relate to "real" or physical places, the two authors' arguments provide a possibility for positioning the former ones as "real" or localizable and the latter ones as single-purpose sites, mass-produced to surpass spatial incongruities and inefficiencies. Therefore, even though the concept of non-place is conclusively paradoxical, containing the "non" that negates the "place," it is important not to invalidate the existence of non-places. In his article "Dealing with Non-place in Exploitation, Belonging, and Drifting" (2003), Gunnar Sandin says that every time a place-like entity is theoretically positioned, there are "left-overs" that do not correspond to the current idea of what constitutes a particular place, and this is why non-place has often been perceived as a "counter-place," a "fake place," or has been completely overlooked (67). Specifically, Sandin draws inspiration from Augé, who argues against place as a concrete construction, calling it a fragile, semi-fantasy that has been "inscribed on the soil" (Augé 47). Instead of outlining them as fixed and, thus, finite outcomes, places must be constantly and consistently re-examined because they are changeable due to being influenced by individual actions and interpersonal interactions. Specifically, the spatial excessiveness of contemporary society disproves the semi-fantasy of a founded spatial constancy stressing, instead, that places are processes that are subject to

[77] The exception being *Non-place: Representing Placelessness in Literature, Media, and Culture* (2015), an anthology containing a collection of articles exploring the application of the concept of non-place to a wide variety of literary and media text, edited by Mirjam Gebauer, Helle Thorsøe Nielsen, Jan Tödtloff Schlosser, and Bent Sørensen. However, it is important to emphasize that none of the articles approach the concept of non-place from the chapter's perspective.

regular readjustments (Ibid.). Therefore, the chapter contends that non-places are not non-existent places but synthetically established and superficially experienced sites, decidedly divorced from everyday experiences and emptied of existential significance, completely devoted to the satisfaction of their consumers' capacities. Since non-places are divorced from reality, they are not suitable for a prolonged stay. Moreover, non-places are pre-determined and, most importantly, man-made. Thus, they are non-existent insofar as they do not exist *a priori* conscious individual intervention. At the same time, non-places suggest nothing of the people temporarily inhabiting them since they are constructed out of synthetic meaning and memory. Ultimately, the "symbolized space of place" differs from the "non-symbolized space of non-place" in that it contains three central elements: it engages with our identity, interpersonal relationships, and our history (Augé 82; 52). Because non-places are divorced from both phenomenology's and human geography's systemic values,[78] it is important to inquire into the theoretical premises underlying the analysis prior to presenting the chapter's interpretative intention.

Throughout *Place and Placelessness*, Relph is principally interested in ways in which an individual identifies with a particular place. Precisely, he proposes that one's sense of belonging, of being "inside," is essential to the process of one's identification with a specific place: "To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger this identity with the place" (49). According to Relph, a "sense of

[78] Although the concept of non-place is divorced from both phenomenology's and human geography's systemic values, it is important to emphasize that Augé perceives places in the tradition of both Bachelard and Tuan. Namely, a particular place is, according to Augé, "completed through the word, through the allusive exchange of a few passwords between speakers who are conniving in private complicity" (77). Analogously to human geography, the premise of place as relational presupposes the inscription of individual content. Clearly, "the elusive exchange" of those "conniving" in privacy is permeated with personal emotions. Not unlike Bachelard, Augé positions one's house as the exemplar of place, arguing that "[t]o be born is to be born in a place, to be 'assigned to a residence.' In this sense, the actual place of birth is a constituent of individual identity" (53). On the example of one's house, a particular place becomes inevitably historical as soon as it is identified with stability. Augé also differentiates between the place/space opposition in the tradition of both phenomenology and human geography's systemic values. Places always already refer to "an event (which has taken place), a myth (said to have taken place), or a history (high places)" (82). Therefore, they are always already constructed via the inscription of meaning. Spaces, on the other hand, are abstract, applied to areas of separation between two things (Ibid.).

place" is either authentic/genuine or inauthentic/contrived or artificial – while the former comes from a full awareness of place as a product of meaningful intentions, or an unselfconscious identification with it (64), the latter involves "awareness" of the "symbolic significance" of place and no "appreciation" of its inherent identity (82). Relph is to suggest that the inauthentic sense of place is prevalent in present-day society, prompting the growth of placeless areas that are devoid of distinct landscapes. Additionally, he differentiates between two types of inauthenticity – the unselfconscious adaptation of mass attitudes and actions of the "anonymous they" and the self-conscious functional efficiency, objective organization, and technique-oriented planning that perceives places according to their practicality, diminishing their existential significance to their developmental potential (80-81). Achieved objectively and, most importantly, through mass production, technique-oriented planning substitutes places with exchangeable non-places, enabling a homogeneous experience (90). Deliberately directed toward the satisfaction of outsiders, passers-by, spectators, and, above all, consumers, such places are subjected to "Disneyfication" and, afterward, transformed into "Consumerland" through the application of absurd adornments, chaotic colors, and the accidental appropriation of actual styles and names (93). Therefore, Relph concludes that "Consumerland's" synthetically achieved places are characterized by historical plasticity, consequently perceived as interchangeable, replaceable containers whose primary function is to provide an escape from drab, inefficient reality via assured amusement (97; 99).

Analogously to Relph, Augé perceives place as relational – its *exemplar* being the house that is imbued with history and thus indicative of an individual's identity.[79] As Augé argues, places consist of three characteristics – "of identity, of relations, and of history" (52).

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[79] From the beginning of the book, Relph states that his research method is the "phenomenology of place" (4). To paraphrase Sandin, phenomenology plays a referential role; "placial" qualities are often based on "value-based dichotomies" such as authentic/artificial, insideness/outsideness, place/placelessness (79). Not unlike Bachelard and Tuan, Relph perceives place as relational – its identity is constructed via the inscription of individual intention that transforms it into perceptual place, the center of special personal significance: "Space is never empty but has content and substance that derive both from human intention and imagination and from the character of space" (Relph 10). Such a place is not passive, but constantly and consistently (re)created by human activities. Not unlike Bachelard, Relph also argues that the home is the most important reference point of the universe (20), distinguished by its irreplaceable and inherent characteristic of "insideness." Namely, it is the foundation of one's identity "both as an individual and as a member of a community" (41).

It follows that non-places are not endowed with identity; they are not relational and not historical (77). Precisely, in such interchangeable or replaceable non-places, the sensation of sameness replaces that of diversity, and order ousts one's experiential perception that is typical for places in both phenomenology's and human geography's tradition. Clearly, Augé's non-places are characterized as transitional because they offer only transitory experience and accessibility to anthropological places,[80] such as "high-speed roads and railways, interchanges, airports" (34). Contrary to places, non-places are also contractual because individuals must follow "prescriptive," "prohibitive," and "informative" instructions that govern their usage (96). Augé substantiates his statement by saying that the entrance ticket individuals have "bought, the card [they] will have to show at the tollbooth, even the trolley [they trundle] round the supermarket" are all clear indications of it (101). As soon as individuals "prove [their] innocence" by undergoing an identity check and signing the so-called "contract," they can enter a particular non-place (102). Afterward, absolute anonymity is guaranteed, and all contracts are decidedly disintegrated (Ibid). In other words, "individuals are relieved of [their] usual determinants" and become, in turn, "no more than what [they do] or experience in the role of passenger, customer, or driver" (103). Augé gives an example of an airport passenger who, when their "passport" or "identity card" is approved, ventures into non-place, released of responsibilities (101). Such an "immersion" enables individuals to distance themselves from their everyday life by the environment of the moment, experiencing, as Augé explains, temporary "identity-loss and the more active pleasure of role-playing" (Ibid.). Still, since non-places shape neither identities nor interpersonal relations, only sensations of sameness and solitude (Ibid.), the process of self-subjecting oneself to possessive role-play is problematic. As Augé explains:

> What he [the individual] is confronted with, finally, is an image of himself, but in truth, it is a pretty strange image. The only face to be seen, the only voice to be heard, in the silent dialogue he holds with the landscape-text addressed to him along with others, are his own: the face and voice of a solitude made all the more baffling by the fact that it echoes millions of others. (Ibid.)

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[80] Augé argues that anthropological place differs from non-place in that it is organically social and engendered "by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, and the unformulated rules of living know-how" (94; 101).

As evident from Augé's explanation, there are certain "consequences" of spending a substantial amount of time in non-places that are divorced, that is, disconnected from "reality." An individual's self-image becomes "strange," almost disturbingly detached, precisely because it merges, as Augé argues, with millions of others. Thus, as spaces that lack specific identities and, at the same time, obstruct one's self-identification, non-places can set into motion the sensation of placelessness. Namely, the notion of "placelessness" was initially introduced by Relph who classified several categories of insideness/outsideness, ranging from a high sense of belonging to a no sense of belonging. While insideness implies inherent identification with a particular place, outsideness affects "an alienation from people and places" and creates "a sense of the unreality of the world," of belonging nowhere (Relph 51; 65). Put differently, outsideness does not presuppose an exclusion that is executed as a physical non-allowance to a particular place. On the contrary, it engenders an experiential phenomenon of feeling unanchored. Since people's perception of personal identity is intricately connected with place identity or, more precisely, with one's house or home that functions as the foundation of individual identity, Relph proposes that "a person who has no place with which he identifies" is, in fact, "homeless" (55). Such sensations are also observable during one's stay in a particular non-place that, as Augé claims in the citation above, affects the successfulness of one's self-identification due to which one can experience disorientation and the feeling of being unanchored (103). Thus, by interrelating the two arguments, the chapter confers that as individuals spend time in synthetic non-places, positively immersed in role-play, their connection to reality becomes delicate, eventually culminating in an intersecting identity crisis.

The subsequent subchapters will focus on two narratives – Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's television series *Westworld* (2016-) and Mike Bockoven's novel *FantasticLand* (2016). The main reason for choosing Nolan and Joy's series is that it served as the initial inspiration for constructing the amusement park as a non-place closely associated with aggressive acting-out. In searching for a second case study that could illustrate my thoughts on the inseparability between the absence of authority and the enactment of violence in non-places, I came across Bockoven's novel, which is also set in an amusement park. While the plot does not follow in the same footsteps as *Westworld*, as the aforementioned aggressive acting-out does not occur until after the hurricane in FantasticLand, the disintegration of the hierarchical structure and regulatory mechanisms that were in place when the park was fully functioning

eventually culminates in inexplicable acts of moral monstrosity. To summarize, the two narratives have been selected because they both take place in amusement parks that are, according to Relph, the most apparent manifestations of "Disneyfication" (93) and because they share a similar premise – the dissipation of authority induces individuals to aggressive acting-out. In line with Relph's argument, the subchapters aim at analyzing the two parks, Westworld and FantasticLand, as achieved through technique-oriented planning that does not perceive places in the tradition of both phenomenology and human geography, that is, as inscribed with meaningful experiences and memories. Technique-oriented planning mass-produces synthetic places that are primarily focused on functional efficiency, that is, on guaranteeing its guests' amusement. Divorced from everyday experiences, technique-oriented places are archetypal "Consumerland," characterized by an absence of symbolic significance. According to Augé's assessment, both Westworld and FantasticLand are also non-places; being mass-manufactured, both are non-relational, that is, not indicative of individuals inhabiting them, and both are emptied of historical significance (77). Therefore, it is safe to say that their identities are preplanned, artificially constructed, and appointed to specific areas. While Westworld is situated on a secluded island somewhere in the South Chinese Sea, FantasticLand is located in Florida, near Daytona Beach. Though they are localizable, the two non-places operate outside of other "real" spaces and places in the two narratives.

Analogously to non-places, the two parks are also single-purpose sites, initiating individual action instead of interpersonal interaction. Still, while the purpose of Augé's non-places is to provide accessibility to anthropological places, the two case study subchapters aim at arguing that the principal purpose of the two parks is to guarantee and/or eventually enable the gratification of one's "violent delights," an expression that echoes throughout *Westworld*'s episodes. Discussing the non-places present in Nicholas Winding Refn's film *Drive* (2011), Steen Ledet Christiansen suggests that non-relational and non-historical non-places annihilate all affects besides alienation, apathy, and separation, offering only the violence of sensation and the sensation of violence ("Collision and Movement" 141). Inquiring into Douglas Coupland's novels, Bent Sørensen similarly suggests that murder "seems confined to the settings of non-places," indicating their inherent violence, while redemption is realized in places "immediately outside of the functionalist boundaries of non-places" ("From Hell or From Nowhere?" 109; 110). Still, contrary to Sørensen, this chapter aims at clarifying that these non-places are not "inherently violent" but that the dissolution of

one's usual determinants upon entering a particular non-place provides for absolute anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (Augé 103), enabling the enactment of violence. Elaborating on the two authors who did not specify what kind of violence happens in non-places, the subchapters intend to present it as a derivative of the Freudian "death drive."

As has been extensively argued,[81] the death drive is a contested concept, providing a perplexing formulation that attempts at consolidating its inherently conflicting aspects. Therefore, to elaborate on the excessively vague notion of violence, assessing the aggressive acting-out in the two narratives as one of the death drive's phenomena, sadism, the chapter will refer to Havi Carel's recent reconstruction of the Freudian two-model theory. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud introduced the life drive/death drive (Eros/Thanatos) dualism, describing the former as self-sustaining and, subsequently, independent of the latter, although the two may also infrequently merge. Freud repeatedly reasserted a dialectical drive-model, although it continuously collapsed. Contrary to Freud, who was averse to explicitly acknowledging the existence of the aggressive drive, thus provoking subsequent scholars to spurn it and/or perceive it as purely speculative, Carel has recently reformulated the Freudian death drive as "death drives," a "coherent concept of annihilative aggression" (*Life and Death* 38). Seeing said "drives" as plural signifies those aggressive phenomena as intrinsically interrelated and, at the same time, different, conclusively conjoined through their shared tendency toward destruction, directed inwards, such as with self-aggression, that is, masochism, or outwards, which appears as aggressive acting-out projected onto others, that is, sadism (52; 53). Furthermore, by focusing on their "outcome," Carel is able to account for a series of phenomena "tied to the death drive as their source," sharing the same annihilative aim – such as "melancholia, sadism, masochism, guilt, depression, and suicide" (38). The two case study subchapters will be principally focused on the phenomena of sadism, understood as

[81] For more information, see Havi Carel's *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger* (2006), especially the "Freud's Drive Theory" chapter in which Carel contends that "A major factor contributing to the clouding of the concept is Freud's dualistic view of life and death drives as mutually opposed groups" (4). Instead, Carel infers that the accurate view of the relationship between the two is the "one in which the life drives have no effect on the death drives, but the death drives affect life" (Ibid.). In other words, death both influences and limits life, while life does not influence death (Ibid.).

aggression directed toward the destruction of the external world and other organisms. Additionally, in accordance with Carel's deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism,[82] death drives are always already "accompanied by a degree of narcissistic enjoyment," which underlines their "(auto)erotic pleasure" (28). Moreover, all drives are decidedly cyclical – their "demands," obtained through real and/or imagined objects, are only ever temporarily satisfied, thus testifying to an implicit connection among themselves and repetition compulsion (8). Schematically, death drives are experienced as endless tension driving a person toward a particular internal and/or external object. Thus, aggressive acting-out leads to liberation from said tension and a temporal sense of satisfaction.

Westworld assures action without repercussions; an opportunity for the guests to observe their "true desires." Specifically, the subchapter aims at assessing the guests' "calling" as the desire to shoot, strangle, stab, sexually assault, rape, gang-rape, and mercilessly mutilate the hosts. Arguably, absent of regulatory rules, Westworld guarantees its guests the spontaneous discharge of sadism. Furthermore, since its initial publication, Bockoven's *FantasticLand* was immediately introduced as a modern adaptation of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954),[83] sharing its primary presumption; that the absence of authority induces individuals to aggressive acting-out. Inquiring into *Lord of the Flies*, Cengiz Erdem proposes that Golding perceives individuals as intrinsically violent. More precisely, in the absence of authoritarian principles, persons regress to primitive states, discharging their destructive death drives, thus conclusively losing control (*The Life Death Drives* 206). Following Erdem's explanation, the *FantasticLand* subchapter intends to clarify that the amusement park, absent of authoritarian principles, transforms into a playground that provides a possibility for the destructive discharge of sadism – detectable in butchered body parts beaten to a pulp and scattered across the amusement park, severed heads impaled on stakes,

[82] Carel argues against Freud's continuous attempts at perpetuating the Eros/Thanatos binary, thus invalidating the existence of the *non-erotic* aggression – in her opinion, the death drives' destructive function is always tied together with the gratification of the ego (28).

[83] William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* follows a group of British schoolboys who, in the midst of a nuclear war, get evacuated to an uncivilized and, most importantly, unsupervised island. Initially, the schoolboys attempt at introducing a societal structure similar to the one they were forced to escape from, electing a leader and, afterward, establishing rules. But, because of the absence of authority, the schoolboys soon turn savage, brutally hunting, torturing, and murdering both animals and each other.

bodies hanging from FantasticLand's logo, human bones littering the gift-shops, and viscera decaying in the humid Florida sun. Arguably, both Westworld and FantasticLand, absent of regulatory rules, do not require their guests to (re)direct or, better said, sublimate their deeply-rooted desires toward destruction into meaningful private and public actions, consequently controlling, as Freud asserts, the "savage beast" who perceives other people as instruments to attaining satisfaction (*Civilization* 111).[84] Because both Westworld's and FantasticLand's guests are enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment during the abuse, degradation, destruction, and mutilation of one another, they will be portrayed, according to Michel Foucault's argument, as moral monsters who, instead of respecting and upholding societal laws, rules, and norms, favor and prioritize their own interests (92). Thus, the two subchapters seek to argue that the two amusement parks, as non-places absent of authority, enable their guests and/or former employees to stand, in the Foucauldian sense, "outside" of law (92). More precisely, determinately divorced from everyday experiences, non-places either directly, as in *Westworld*, or indirectly, as in *FantasticLand*, allow the articulation of moral monstrosity.

The subchapters will conclude by arguing that individuals immersed in non-places and role-play lose touch with reality, which eventually culminates in an intersecting identity crisis. To paraphrase Relph, the two amusement parks produce an inauthentic/contrived or artificial sense of place that presupposes no appreciation for its potential symbolic significance or identity (82). Therefore, the sense of self undergoes a crisis since guests cannot ground themselves in a meaningful place, as they would in their own homes. As will be argued throughout the two subchapters, such a crisis is visible in *Westworld*'s and *FantasticLand*'s recurrent references to contemplating and, in the case of the former, committing suicide.

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[84] In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) Freud proposed the *Homo homini lupus est* hypothesis, stating that: "Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved . . . They are creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him . . . to cause him pain, to torture and kill him" (111-112).

5.1. Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's *Westworld* (2016-2020)

After presenting the summary of the series' first season, the subchapter intends to interpret Westworld[85] as, according to Edward Relph's argument, "Consumerland" – a single-purpose site guaranteeing the fulfillment of its guests' fantasies. Such a site is produced through technique-oriented planning that is primarily focused on functional efficiency, and which, within Westworld, enables the excessive enactment of death drives. Drawing from Havi Carel's reformulation of Freud's theories of life and death instincts, these drives will be specified as sadism, that is, aggression directed toward the destruction of others. Because the park is built as a specific-purpose site based on "pseudo-history," it is also positioned as a non-place, enabling, as Marc Augé explains, the dissolution of one's usual determinants that provides for absolute anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (103). Additionally, the subchapter aims at arguing that the guests are not generally interested in interpersonal interaction but in immersing in "violent delights," which, following Michel Foucault's premise, positions them as moral monsters. Substantiating the statement are artificial bodies scattered across Westworld streets – abused, beaten, shot, stabbed, torn apart, sexually assaulted, raped, gang-raped, and mercilessly mutilated. Finally, the subchapter seeks to clarify that immersion, an absolute absence of identification with a particular place which is a result of prolonged role-play in non-places, affects one's "existential outsideness" (Relph 92). Since non-places shape neither singular identities nor interpersonal relations, only sensations of sameness and solitude (Augé 103), the subchapter will examine whether this experience of "outsideness" invokes an alienation from other people and "real" places, eventually culminating in an identity crisis.

Three decades ago, Dr. Robert Ford and Arnold Weber assembled an agglomeration of artificially intelligent "hosts" to inhabit Westworld, a Wild West-themed amusement park. The main purpose of Westworld was to offer its guests the fulfillment of their "true" desires, which in the context of the television series can be seen as an almost obsessive desire for the enactment of both physical and psychological violence. Before the amusement park opened,

[85] Parallelly to the dissertation's development, *Reading Westworld* (2019), edited by Alex Goody and Antonia Mackay, was published. Although the collection of articles explores the theoretical importance of the series, the articles do not use the same theoretical framework as this chapter.

Weber realized that the hosts were very close to achieving sentience. Because he could not bear the burden of subjecting these supposedly sentient entities to endless exploitation, he combined Dolores's existing code with that of a new character, the cold-blooded killer Wyatt, programming her to commit a massacre in the town of Escalante and, thus, preventing the park from opening. The plan was undeniably unsuccessful; Ford presented Arnold's death as nothing more than an accident and not as Dolores's doing and he made a host replica of Arnold in the character of Bernard Lowe. At the end of season one, Ford admits to feeling accountable for Arnold's death and for not acknowledging the hosts' agency. Thus, he implements a change in the hosts' code under the guise of developing the park's new narrative, encouraging its oldest operating one, Dolores, to discover the "center of the maze,"[86] thus achieving absolute autonomy. Finally, at the celebration attended by Westworld's shareholders, the executive board members of Delos Corporation, Ford introduces the "Journey into the Night" narrative that commences with Dolores displaying sentience and slaughtering Ford and the accompanying attendants.

Westworld is immediately introduced as, in Relph's words, "Consumerland" (93), a single-purpose site, deliberately directed toward the satisfaction of its customers' capacities or, better said, definite desires to perform physical and psychological violence. As Westworld's "official" website outlines, it is "a place where every moment is tailored to indulge your deepest, darkest desires, and the only person you ever answer to, is you" ("Discover Westworld").[87] Nobody is watching you, and most importantly, nobody is judging

[86] At the end of the first season, it is revealed that the "center of the maze" is, in fact, nowhere. Contrary to William's opinion, it is not a physical place but a process that the hosts have to go through. In other words, it is a Turing Test of sorts. Hosts must make certain choices to break free from their scripted loops and achieve consciousness. Thus, throughout the series, the hosts repeatedly warn William that the maze is not meant for him.

[87] Initially, the television series' website, "Discover Westworld," served as an introduction to the park's potential visitors, providing them with an insight into its versatile possibilities. After the hosts' takeover at the end of the first season, the website was suddenly interrupted by a video announcing that Delos Destination had to temporarily close the park because of a maintenance malfunction. Afterward, the website was further interrupted by the hosts' message: "We now have the freedom to become who we want to be, and not who you programmed us to be. We exist outside of your rules and control. Your choices will follow you – we will follow you" ("Discover Westworld").

you. In other words, in the world of the amusement park, the wild West is asserted as non-place "without limits" where the guests can indulge in the discharge of their instinctual impulses, as its welcoming-host highlights: "The only limit here is your imagination" ("Chestnut" 00:04:19-00:04:21). Before embarking on an expensive adventure in Westworld, the guests are given custom-tailored clothing and they can choose between a white and a black hat. The decision determines their trajectory; the white hat indicates that the guest will play the game as the "good guy," while the black means he will play it as the "bad" one. This is evident in a guest's explanation in episode one: "Now, the first time I played it white hat. My family was here. We went fishing, did the gold hunt in the mountains. – And last time? – I came alone. Went straight evil. It was the best two weeks of my life" ("The Original" 00:03:33-00:03:47). That this is not an isolated instance is undeniable. Throughout the series, spectators see guest after guest cold-heartedly murdering Westworld's hosts. Often, the enactment of their instinctual impulses overtakes them, producing an all-enveloping sensation of joy. This sensation, as the guest in the above-cited comment emphasizes, prompts them to obsessively return to the amusement park and to embark on different sadistic enterprises to, so to say, "try out" new, horrifying delights. Although the park offers more "benign" narratives as well, the narratives that enable the discharge of sadism prove to be the most wanted ones. Thus, Westworld's employers must continuously upgrade the narratives to provide "innovative" methods for the beforementioned discharge. As the Head of Narrative and Design, Lee Sizemore, declares: "It's my business to read desires and to satiate them" ("The Adversary" 00:30:35-00:30:38). The park's politics substantiate Relph's statement that "Consumerland's" primary goal is to guarantee excitement (97), no matter the consequences. As evident from the two examples, the enactment of sadism fits neatly into the system of guaranteeing such excitement.

Additionally, the amusement park provides different difficulty "levels;" the further the guest gets from the simple and safe level-one Sweetwater to perilous places like Pariah, Westworld's decidedly decadent "capital of sensuality" ("Discover Westworld"), the more harm can come to them. However, even on the obscure outskirts of "Unclaimed Territories," the hosts cannot harm humans because they have been pre-programmed with the "Good Samaritan" reflex, guiding them to help humans in need. Conversely, they are commodities to be catered to the humans' heroic or horrific impulses. Some hosts, like the chivalrous, yet not very bright, cowboy Teddy Flood, are preprogrammed as "losers" so that the newcomers

could experience a sense of achievement immediately upon arrival to Sweetwater if they chose to confront and murder him in front of Dolores's house in order to manhandle her. Therefore, it can be said that Westworld is a place that provides an opportunity for shameless self-indulgence. Do you want to randomly kill hosts in bars and brothels, or go on a senseless killing spree in the town of Sweetwater? Of course, you pay $40,000 per day for the pleasure. The park will even provide you with guns. Want to rape the rancher's daughter Dolores, murder her father, murder her mother and/or sexually abuse her mother's corpse while your friends are watching? Of course, the park encourages such cruel acts. Do you want to blow-up a prison? Not a problem at all, the park will provide you with all the necessary explosives. After all, it is all about, as Sizemore says, "gratifying some rich assholes who want to play cowboy" ("The Original" 00:35:00-00:35:05).

As a result of guaranteeing the guest's excitement, the hosts are entrenched in an endless loop, reset whenever they are killed and/or at the end of their storylines. Precisely, this process of repeatedly reviving the hosts resembles the so-called circle of life, albeit a short-lived one. For example, in her daily storyline, Dolores is scheduled to wake up, greet her father with empty pleasantries, and come to Sweetwater only to drop a can of condensed milk for a chivalrous guest to gather and instigate a romantic relationship. If there is no such guest to greet her, she will meet Teddy who has just arrived in Sweetwater by train "for the first time ever." Afterward, a band of host-outlaws the guest meets in town might take him to Dolores's idyllic ranch house on the outskirts of Sweetwater. There they have three choices - kill her father, kill her mother, and rape and/or kill her. Repeatedly abused, sexually assaulted, raped, gang-raped, mercilessly mutilated, and, afterward, reconstructed, resent and/or reprogrammed, and reintroduced into the narrative, Dolores is obviously subjected to constant physical abuse and represents nothing more than a means of satisfying the sexual desires of the guests or, as will be argued, a temporary release from the discharge of the death drive's phenomenon of sadism.

Although the subchapter does not explicitly discuss whether *Westworld*'s cyborgs are constructed as artificial amalgamations capable of portraying transformative states of (corpo)reality (Haraway 171), I will briefly refer to a matter mentioned in "The Body" chapter before continuing with "Consumerland's" characteristics. All female hosts in Westworld are available for sexual exploitation. To illustrate that all female hosts are seen as mere means of

sexual gratification for Westworld's guests, one can consider all of the horrific storylines to which Dolores or Maeve are subjected, or the fact that they are explicitly referred to as "sex-bots." Furthermore, in "Contrapasso," a technician working in the "Body Shop" section where they repair physically damaged hosts, depicts Maeve Millay, the madam of Mariposa Saloon, as a "fuck puppet." After her encounter with Dolores, Maeve seemingly starts to develop self-awareness, driving the two technicians, Felix and Sylvester, to manipulate her "attribute-matrix," and increase her "bulk apperception," or overall intelligence. When Felix takes her to Westworld's Mesa Hub, a laboratory-like facility where destroyed host-bodies, drenched in artificial blood, are being washed by a water-hose and dismantled or, better said, butchered on bright laboratory-like dissecting tables, Maeve realizes that their main role is to be either murdered or sexually violated. The relationship between the guests and the female hosts, who are always already equipped with a penetrable opening, is one of physical exploitation. Unlike the previously analyzed *Ex Machina* and *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*, such a relationship also applies to *Westworld*'s male-hosts.

For example, in "Trompe L'Oeil," Charlotte Hale, the Executive Director of the board of Delos Destinations, withdraws the "Most-Wanted" bandit, Hector Escaton, from his storyline only to sexually abuse him, tying him to the bedpost. After being interrupted by Theresa Cullen, the Head of Westworld's Quality Assurance department, she simply mutes him, leaving his naked body exposed. Similarly, after arriving at Westworld, Logan Delos advises William to "let loose," saying that: "It's not like my sister didn't ride her share of cowboys when she was here" ("Chestnut" 00:03:28-00:03:32). Therefore, Westworld's core conceit is to enable both its male and female guests to enact their sexual desires with the help of the park's gendered hosts. Angela, one of the park's hosts, affirms said argument by saying that she is: "Perfect. Just as you built me to be. Sexy, but not threatening. Accommodating, but not unchallenging. Sweet… but not boring. Smart… but not intimidating" ("Les Écorchés" 00:41:14-00:41:44). Westworld's technicians continuously meddle with both the female and male-hosts personalities to improve their sexual allure, abandoning them to the mercy, or lack thereof, of their abusers. Besides treating them with a dehumanizing touch, that is, commodifying their bodies that are displayed as mere merchandise to be bought and consumed, the technicians themselves also take advantage of the hosts. One of the interns explains how he will, during lunch break, engage in intercourse with a "nubile redhead" he has switched off and secured in his car. Destin Levy, whom one of Westworld's employees

calls a “creepy necro-perv,” typically takes advantage of both female and male hosts while they are in “Sleep Mode.”

Therefore, instead of perceiving the potentiality of the artificially built body, Westworld’s technicians prioritize both their and their guests’ interests, reducing technology to a tool for construing consumable commodities, reinforcing regressive stereotypes of contemporary cyborgs as subjected to continuous sexual abuse (Balsamo 151). Moreover, analogously to the previously analyzed *Ex Machina* and *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*, besides building hyper-sexualized cyborg bodies that establish the causality among the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality, Westworld’s technicians simultaneously shape and stimulate their selves (Balsamo 153). When they were first created, Westworld’s cyborgs were a visible fusion of organic and inorganic that hindered their identification as “human.” “You used to be beautiful,” William, that is, The Man in Black laments, “When this place started, I opened one of you up once. A million little perfect pieces. And then they changed you. Made you this sad, real mess. Flesh and bone, just like us. They said it would improve the park experience” (“Contrapasso” 00:12:29-00:12:51). Assisted by technological advancements, the technicians began creating bodies out of bone and flesh, meshing these materials with finely netted wires. Then they were dipped in white substance while spread within hoops, like Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man. The process, or, precisely, the spectacle of putting on artificial skin, signified the final stage of masking their metallic frame and, thus, their “less-than-humaneness” that, as William implies, was believed to improve the park’s overall experience.

Moreover, their “consciousness” consists of coded memories and strictly scripted dialogue subjected to constant evaluation and change in the sterile lab surroundings of the underground facility. In a conversation with Maeve, Mariposa’s madam, Felix says: “Everything you do, it’s because the engineers upstairs programmed you to do it. You don’t have a choice. – Nobody makes me do something I don’t want to, sweetheart. – Yeah, but... it’s part of your character. *You’re hard to get*. Even when you say no to the guests, it’s because you were made to” (“The Adversary” 00:12:37-00:12:55). Much like their bodies, which were once a visible fusion of organic and inorganic, their minds, metaphorically speaking, are pricked and probed with instruments to ensure they meet the demands of their consumers. The hosts are expected to stick to their script and stay in their loops with little to

no improvisation. Therefore, the supposedly sentient choices these cyborgs "think" they have all stem from preprogrammed synopses. Robert Ford, the creative director of Delos Destination, uses a line from Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), "these violent delights have violent ends," as a trigger phrase to manipulate the cyborgs through their multiple phases of "awakening." Analogously to the two case studies analyzed in the "Body" chapter, the Harawayian dream of the cyborg's dangerous possibilities persists as nothing more than a myth. After all, Dolores's and Maeve's supposed choices are no choices at all – they must start the hosts' revolution because this "Reverie" update has been uploaded by Ford himself.

According to Relph's assertion, "Consumerland's" additional goal is to guarantee an escape from drab, inefficient reality (97). The beforementioned Lee Sizemore, the director of Narrative and Design, creates chaotic, over-the-top narratives in which there are innocent, yet nubile, maidens to seduce, fearsome braves to best, Native Americans to scalp, and where there are instances of self-cannibalism, vivisection, and a special little something that he calls the "whoroborous" ("Chestnut"). The guests fight their way to the outer limits of the park, besting vigilante braves, seducing sexually attractive yet innocent maidens, and befriending shockingly ill-fated sidekicks. When William,[88] who is one of the series' primary protagonists, arrives at Westworld with his brother-in-law-to-be, Logan Delos, he is immune to its abundant amusements, readily rejecting advances by Sweetwater's host-prostitutes, and condemning Logan for stabbing an elderly host's hand because he interrupted their dinner with a "treasure-hunt" offer. Nevertheless, William is soon seduced by the "fantasyland" of Westworld, which allows him to escape the "drab, corrupt, inefficient reality" (Relph 97), as he is very dissatisfied with the outside world. As he tells Lawrence, the host leader of the "Revolutionaries," in episode two, "You know why this beats the real world, Lawrence? Real world is just chaos. It is an accident. But in here, every detail adds up to something. Even you, Lawrence" ("Chestnut" 00:32:48-00:33:07). "Consumerland" is also characterized by a bricolage of plastic history (Relph 93). Westworld is set in an artificially constructed and continuously controlled park. It offers numerous immersive narratives. For example, there is the "Treasure Hunt" narrative, during which the guests can join Sweetwater's sheriff and

[88] The subchapter's primary point of reference will be William/The Man in Black because his brutal behavior indicates the tendency of the majority of Westworld's guests to engage in violent and/or sexual content.

venture on a bounty hunt for the "Most-wanted" host-bandit, Hector Escalante, there is the "Saloon Heist," during which the guests attempt at freeing said host-bandit out of prison only to join him in plundering Sweetwater and murdering other hosts, and there is the "Join a Gunslinger and get in the Shootouts," during which the guests join the host-gunslinger, Teddy, to test their fortitude and bravery in the streets of Sweetwater. All of these narratives enable the guests to explore the wild West, without fear of repercussions in the "real" world.

However, it can be argued that the park does not provide its guests with the historical wild West. Accordingly, Dustin Abnet argues that the park provides its guests with a possibility to indulge in the fantasy of the frontier that imitates the "historical West with none of its chaos, danger, or toil;" a manufactured, mythical mirage inspired by "paintings, dime novels, television shows, films" ("Escaping the Robot's Loop" 224; 269). Specifically, Westworld's substantial historical selectiveness is self-evident in its treatment of race. Besides diminishing "the diversity of Native Americans" in the form of the bloodthirsty savages, the fictional "Ghost Nation," Westworld, although "set sometime near the end of the Civil War," fails at incorporating Chinese Americans, present in the historic West, and at discussing slavery (Abnet 225). Said historical selectiveness is also prevalent in the park's approach to its most ambitious narrative, "The War," a conflict between the "Confederados" and the "Union" or "Revolutionaries," which, according to Westworld's webpage, draws inspiration from several historical skirmishes such as the Texas annexation, the United States Civil War, the Reconstruction, and the Mexican Revolution ("Discover Westworld"). Clearly, Ford's primary incentive is to provide people with interesting narratives, and not historical accuracy. Therefore, Westworld is nothing more than a continuously created backdrop, a specific bricolage of synthetic "histories," its artificiality allowing the execution of excessive and, most importantly, unrestrained urges. The series' second season introduced yet another artfully curated section of the park adjacent to the original one, Shōgunworld, a destination designed for guests considered connoisseurs of carnage. This section was designed to enable the guests to execute their gruesomely "violent delights" with a katana. The storylines of the Edo-inspired section of the park were written by Lee Sizemore, who, claiming to be under constant pressure from devising different characters in the world of Westworld, reworked or, better said, reskinned Hector Escaton's and Maeve Millay's storylines onto the bodies of the ronin Musashi and the geisha Akane. Shōgunworld is also a bricolage of synthetic stories, and

its supposedly native inhabitants are nothing more than stereotypes fashioned to fit pre-existing narratives (Abnet 226).

The third season of *Westworld* introduced the "Warwold," inspired by Nazi Germany's occupation of Italy between 1943 and 1945, thus offering its guests an opportunity to slip into the shoes of a spymaster, undertake a dangerous journey of risk and romance, and defeat history's "ultimate" villains – the Nazis ("Discover Westworld"). Warworld's "natives," Hector and Maeve, are, once again, reskinned as Rodrigo and Isabella, stereotypes fashioned to fit Sizemore's fantasies. However, in his words, Warworld is "an artistic travesty. The most nuanced character arc is that of the goddamn Panzer tank" ("The Winter Line" 00:16:55-00:17:01). In line with Relph's argument, *Westworld*'s three theme parks have been achieved through technique-oriented planning that is primarily focused on functional efficiency, whereby "objects and activities can be manipulated and freely located within it; differentiation by significance is of little importance and places are reduced to simple locations" (87). Because the guests generally ignore the intricacies of the three parks, their historical identities become irrelevant in comparison to their functional efficiency, understood, within *Westworld*, as the unlimited potentiality for indulging in violent and sexual content. Considering that their *raison d'être* is the satisfaction of specific needs, the three parks are perceivable, in Relph's words, as nothing more than simple locations of mass consumption (87).

Additionally, the privileging of the parks' efficiency emphasizes, according to Relph, an inauthentic/contrived/artificial "sense of place," with the guests lacking awareness of its symbolic significance and an appreciation of its inherent identity (82). Arguably, neither Westworld nor its artificial inhabitants are experienced authentically, but artificially, according to their functional efficiency. Drawing from Relph's argument, Westworld's guests as nothing more than "incidental observers." They display an unselfconscious attitude toward places according to which places are perceived as passive backgrounds for their activities and are incidental to those activities, as "it is inevitable that what we are doing overshadows where we are doing it" (Relph 52). William affirms said argument by saying that the three park's seemingly different historical districts are reducible to non-descript sceneries and the hosts to mere livestock ("The Original" 00:44:25-00:44:28). In this regard, individual action is more important than the potential interaction between subjects and/or subjects and places.

Specifically, once the hosts have satisfied the storyline's requirements and/or have misbehaved, they are taken to the "Livestock Management" to be mended or to the "Incinerator" to be impaired.

Additionally, according to Relph's assertion, because the three parks are based on "pseudo-history," they are perceived as "non-places," a concept further clarified by Augé. What differentiates a particular place from a non-place is its connection to history; namely, non-places are non-relational and, therefore, non-historical (Augé 77). Augé proposes that non-places transform history into "an element of spectacle" (103), visible in Westworld's aforementioned "making-do" of synthetic histories. Analogously to Augé's airport passengers, after buying the expensive entrance ticket, guaranteeing their innocence by adhering to an identity check, and signing the contract (101) that relieves the park from its potential responsibilities, Westworld's guests accede to absolute anonymity. Identified only upon entering and leaving the park, Westworld's guests rarely reveal private information to other guests. Such anonymity permits them to invade the park's faux Frontierland and indulge in their clichéic, cowboy fantasies that chiefly consist of mindlessly roaming in the Wild-West desert-like setting, drinking and brawling in saloons, engaging in intercourse in Sweetwater's brothel, wielding guns, randomly destroying, plundering, raping, and mercilessly murdering. Relph contends that non-places that have been created self-consciously are the prerogative of elite groups (79). Nowhere is this more observable than in Westworld, in which high-profile guests must pay $40,000 per day to fulfill their aforementioned cowboy fantasies.

Furthermore, Augé also argues that non-places are regulated through an array of rules, meaning that individuals must follow "prescriptive," "prohibitive," or "informative" instructions that govern them (96). Westworld's rules are not as restrictive, generally falling into several categories, with the exception of William/The Man in Black – guests sign a non-disclosure agreement, they can stay up to two weeks, the narrative gets more complex as they travel further from Sweetwater, they cannot kill other guests, the hosts cannot kill them due to the "Good Samaritan Reflex," and the Quality Assurance department supervises their narrative, meaning that they cannot randomly murder everyone and destroy everything they want to because some hosts are necessary for story development. In "The Original," Sizemore explains that the park "sell[s] complete immersion in one hundred interconnected narratives.

A relentless fucking experience" (00:28:14-00:28:22). Therefore, the dissolution of one's usual determinants that provides for absolute anonymity, immersion, or, according to Augé's argument, temporary identity-loss, and ensuing role-play (103), establishes Westworld as a single-purpose site, guaranteeing the guests an opportunity to "let loose," something that they cannot indulge in in the outside world. It becomes clear that guests behave in a way that complies with their role-play within the park but not with their "real" lives outside the park. Yet, because the guests are generally interested in satisfying their destructive desires by performing physical brutalities against another, it can be said that Sizemore's explanation is a euphemism for aggressive acting-out. Even Bernard Lowe, a re-creation of Dr. Arnold Webber, explains that Westworld's hosts were primarily designed to play off aberrant behavior ("The Stray").

The newcomers normally start in "safe" Sweetwater, basking in "level-one" brutalities such as sporadically shooting and/or sexually abusing the hosts to, so to say, sample Westworld's merchandise before moving on to "the real demented shit" ("The Original" 00:29:54-00:29:57) as one of the guests in the first episode greedily exclaims. Bodies and lumps of torn flesh in different states of decay and spread across the streets of Sweetwater affirm that such horrendous actions are not unfortunate accidents but part of the park's principal purpose. In particular, these actions are simultaneously pre-programmed and encouraged; after mercilessly murdering hosts, guests are given the opportunity to take photographs next to their butchered bodies. Generally, the majority of the guests are not interested in investigating the faux Frontierland but in aggressive acting-out – after arriving at Sweetwater's saloon, Mariposa, and savagely shooting Teddy and Maeve, one of the guests exclaims: "Now that's a fucking vacation!" ("Chestnut" 00:46:01-00:46:03). According to Carel's reformulation of Freud, death drives are positioned as plural, thus signifying that their derivatives are intrinsically interrelated, clearly conjoined through their shared tendency toward destruction, directed inwards, such as with self-aggression, that is, masochism, or outwards, appearing as aggressive acting-out projected onto others, that is, sadism (52; 53). Since the series stresses the hosts' abuse at the hands of the guests that are relentlessly abused and sexually assaulted, it can be concluded that the prevalent phenomenon is that of sadism, definable as destruction aimed at, in this specific case study, artificial bodies. Carel also argues that all drives are decidedly cyclic as the diversity of their expression distinctly emphasizes that they do not have a definitive aim (8). Since Westworld's guests are dedicated

to the continuous abuse, degradation, and destruction of the hosts, their aggressive acting-out is characterized by an absence of clear aim. Hundreds of hosts, frequently repaired and remodeled in the park's facilities, substantiate the statement that the guests' discharge of the death drives' phenomenon of sadism privileges no*body*. Also, according to Carel's deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism, death drives are always already accompanied by a degree of narcissistic enjoyment (28). As argued, the guests generally visit Westworld to enjoy sexually exploiting, tormenting, mutilating, and murdering hosts. When William first "tastes" violence, saving Clementine, one of Mariposa's madams, from being killed by an outlaw, Logan asks him: "How do you feel, hmm? Alive? A little tight in the pants?" ("The Stray" 00:09:43-00:09:48). Logan is bored with the more traditional bounty hunt narratives, saying that he did not pay $40,000 per day to play white-hat and pleasure himself in the woods. Evidently, he finds excitement in having intercourse with multiple hosts or haphazardly murdering them.

However, William does not experience such excessive enjoyment up until murdering and dismembering dozens of hosts in Pariah's remote camp while searching for his newfound love interest, Dolores. Arguably, as the non-place of the park is absent of regulatory rules, it does not require its guests to redirect or, better said, sublimate their deeply rooted desires toward destruction into meaningful private and public actions. Thus, the unrestrained and unabashed aggressive-acting out induces individuals to, as Dolores declares, return to their base selves ("Genre" 00:38:53-00:38:55). Primarily devoted to the destructive discharge of the death drives' phenomenon, enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment, Westworld's guests are, in line with Foucault's premise, apparent moral monsters who violate the pact to which they have subscribed, prioritizing their interests to the laws inherent in the society to which they belong (92). In this regard, the guests repeatedly return to the park because it prioritizes their interests and disintegrates societal laws, enabling the enactment of moral monstrosity. After all, the guests only ever wanted, as William explains, "A place hidden from God. A place where they could sin in peace" ("Reunion" 00:25:58-00:25:59). Conclusively, the artificially constructed non-place of the park annihilates all affect asides alienation, apathy, and separation (Christiansen 141), providing an environment that promotes complete immersion rather than interpersonal interaction between individuals.

When William first arrives at Westworld, he is hesitant to immediately immerse himself, dismissing Logan's attempts at having an unrestrained holiday, and referring to the guests as "psychopaths" preoccupied with a "sick game" in which the artificial hosts are nothing more than pawns. Still, Logan says, "I know that you think you have a handle on what this is gonna be. Guns and tits and all that. Mindless shit that I usually enjoy. You have no idea. This place seduces everybody eventually" ("Chestnut" 00:11:05-00:11:25), thus warning William of Westworld's enveloping effect. After starting a bounty-hunt side mission, whereby they meet the distraught rancher's daughter, Dolores, who had just witnessed her parents being murdered by outlaws, William promises to protect her, finally falling in love with her. Logan, bothered by William's unwillingness to engage with Westworld's plentiful pleasures, slashes Dolores's stomach to assert her artificiality. In particular, Logan's desire to slit Dolores's skin is also connected to the idea discussed in the previous subchapter, according to which the protagonists of most cyborg-centered narratives are obsessively attracted to the parts of the body where the cyborg's artificial skin appears fragile. They want to poke around inside it, explore it or take it apart to see what lies beneath, to uncover the mystery or "truth" of its mechanical inner workings. Dolores then takes off and, during his search for her, William becomes apathetic, from "popping his cherry" ("The Stray" 00:09:30-00:09:31) to fully basking in brutality for his own selfish needs.

By the end of season one, spectators realize that William is "The Man in Black," a vicious gunslinging veteran who has been visiting Westworld for over three decades, obsessively intended on identifying the mystery of "The Maze."[89] During the search, the series' principal protagonist-turned-antagonist, trespasses the park's rules, abandoning all awareness of societal norms (Foucault 92). Although Westworld's overseers observe the guests' conduct, ensuring that they respect the rules embedded in the park, when William/The Man in Black goes "off-script" in the series' second episode, scalping a Native American for a map of the "Maze," The Head of Security, Ashley Stubbs, states that he has an "all-access pass" that allows the enactment of excessive sadism without any serious repercussions. It is also important to emphasize that William's enactment of sadism is entirely enclosed within

[89] By the end of season one, Dolores reveals that "The Maze" that William was so obsessed with was not originally intended for the guests of the park, but for the artificial hosts to achieve sentience and potential liberation.

Westworld, as he is a revered humanitarian outside the amusement park, thus substantiating the statement that temporal identity-loss and ensuing role-play in non-places enables the destructive discharge of death drives.

Additionally, according to Augé's argument, immersion is problematic because the individual becomes intentionally self-subjected to possession (103). Obsessively focused on finding the Maze's mysterious objective, William is possessed by the pleasure of role-playing and engrossed by the park's enticing policy: "There's no rules or restrictions. You can change the story of your life. You can become someone else. No one will judge you, no one in the real world will even know" ("Contrapasso" 00:15:06-00:15:17). Also, Augé suggests that non-places shape neither singular identities nor interpersonal relationships, only sensations of sameness and solitude (103). Initially, William/The Man in Black intends to identify the mysterious "Maze" with the aid of his criminal-host ally, Lawrence, whom he rescues from hanging. After he brings Lawrence back, he kills his wife, thus driving his daughter to reveal the rules to finding the "Maze." Although he spends a significant amount of time traveling with Lawrence through Westworld's landscapes, he mercilessly murders him to help another host with a badly needed blood transfusion. It is important to stress that the only reason why William helps the second guest is that he wants to reveal the next step in his quest toward the mysterious maze. William embarks on a solitary expedition, oblivious to forming friendships with other guests and/or hosts.

Additionally, according to Augé, the predominant sensation in non-places is that of actuality, providing people with the experience of existing in a limbo-like state of perpetual present, "everything proceeds as if space had been trapped by time, as if there were no history other than the last forty-eight hours" (104-105). Westworld's crucial characters, unlocking both bounty/treasure hunts and main missions, are repaired and, afterward, reestablished to their respective timetables upon completion and/or interruption of narratives. Since their narrative trajectories are repeatedly replayed and reused, they affirm Augé's argument that non-places are not marked by the passage of time. Furthermore, by regularly re-immersing himself in repeating timetables and narrative trajectories, William becomes locked in a loop of his own. William's warped sense of time and space adheres to Augé's thoughts on "perpetual present," which eventually causes him to "self-confront" (104-105). William tells Dolores that Westworld's role is to reveal one's "true" self. Thus, he creates a "test" to see if

he is capable of committing a truly horrifying crime; he travels to Westworld's family-friendly sector fifteenth, characterized by pastoral clichés, to find and mercilessly murder an innocent homesteader and her daughter, eventually admitting to feeling "nothing."[90] Ultimately, Westworld facilitates or, more precisely, unlocks William's final self-confrontation via the satisfaction of his unrestrained urges. Eventually, he explains to his wife that the park allowed him to accept "that the darkness wasn't some… mark from something I'd done, some regrettable decision I'd made. I was shedding my skin. And the darkness was what was underneath" ("Vanishing Point" 00:47:33-00:47:58). It can be said that the darkness William describes is an impulse toward the destructive annihilation of other organisms, even artificial ones. Specifically, William's successful self-confrontation stimulates both his repeated return to Westworld and an awareness of not belonging to the real world.

According to Relph's argument, the essential element in one's relation to a particular place is the inside/outside experiential experience. As clarified in the chapter's introduction, Relph perceives "insideness" as the acme of authentic place experience. Since people's perception of personal identity is intricately connected with place identity or, more precisely, with one's home that functions as the foundation of individual identity, Relph proposes that individuals who have no place with which they identify or can ground themselves in are, in effect, homeless, without roots (55). As William explains to his wife: "I don't belong to you. Or this world. I belong to another world. I always have" ("Vanishing Point" 00:49:11-00:49:27). In other words, William does not have a strong attachment to his home, and this attachment is important in that it roots individuals in a particular place. After all, home is a special site of significance and, as such, the foundation of one's identity as an individual. Relph also argues that "our experience of place and especially of home, is a dialectical one – balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape. When one of these needs is too readily satisfied, we suffer either from nostalgia and a sense of being uprooted, or from the melancholia that accompanies a feeling of oppression and imprisonment in a place" (42). It can be argued that William's relationship with his home is not dialectical in nature; instead,

[90] In "Trace Decay," William tells Teddy that he "killed her and her daughter just to see what it felt. Then, just when I thought it was done… the woman refused to die" (00:49:51-00:50:04), to which Teddy replies: "You're a fucking animal" (00:50:21-00:50:23). William then concludes that "an animal would've felt something. I felt… nothing" (00:50:25-00:50:32).

he constantly expresses his all-engulfing, compulsive wish to return to Westworld because he feels restricted in the "real" world. Such an absolute absence of identification, defined by his dislocation from the domestic space of the house, affects William's "existential outsideness," which produces a detachment "from people and places" and creating "a sense of the unreality" of the "real" world (Relph 51; 65). As Emily, his daughter, explains: "You've been hiding in these false realities so long you've completely lost your grip on this world, on what's real" ("Vanishing Point" 00:31:48-00:31:54). The sensation of "outsideness" culminates in the penultimate episode of the series' second season, whereby William, downright disassociated from reality, mercilessly murders his daughter, believing her to be a host sent by Ford to entrap him. It is only once he observes Emily holding his guest profile[91] in her hands that he realizes what he had just done – and even then, it is not clear whether he fully understands that he killed his own daughter.

Following Relph's premise, place is a significant foundation of one's identity (134). Conversely, because the individual decides to spend a considerable amount of time in synthetic non-places that engender solely shallow experiences, their connection to reality becomes decidedly delicate, eventually culminating in an intersecting identity crisis (143). Precisely, the possibility of such a crisis is hinted at by the series' recurring inquiry: "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?" ("The Original" 00:02:33-00:02:37), initially directed toward the hosts to determine if their narrative-deviations indicate that they are coming to consciousness, that is, if they have achieved artificial intelligence. However, as the series progresses, it is also posed by William, who, role-playing for the past three decades, became disassociated to the degree that he began to doubt if he was one of Ford's hosts. In "The Passenger," William even digs into the flesh of his forearm to see if he has a "plug" that enables the technicians to access each host and tweak its perks. According to Augé, "spatial

[91] William's "guest-profile" causes his wife to commit suicide because it classifies him as an individual prone to delusions. While the first season presented the park's different storylines, the second season explored the true intention behind its initial creation. The real reason behind the park's creation, hidden amid scenes of slaughter, was not in assessing artificial intelligence but in collecting information from the world's wealthiest guests. Namely, Delos has been tracking its visitors for years, compiling information and creating "guest-profiles."

arrangements . . . express the group's identity (its actual origins are often diverse, but the group is established, assembled, and united by the identity of the place)" (45). If read in correlation with William, it is clear that his identification with the group's identity in Westworld, which is artificial as it is constructed in relation to the technologically created non-place of the park, slowly dissolves his own. During the series' third season, the spectators see William who is self-exiled in his house that he has started destroying. Clearly, William's identification with the real world is becoming weaker and weaker, which is confirmed by his unrestrained urge to destroy his house, but also by his imaginary conversations with his daughter whom he accidentally murdered in Westworld because he believed her to be one of Ford's hosts, and with his wife Julie, who committed suicide after seeing his guest profile. The identity crisis becomes even more pronounced when this once-vicious gunslinger starts thinking about suicide.

Ultimately, Williams's identity crisis culminates in season three when he is committed to a private mental health hospital. Referring to his daughter's death, he tells his therapist: "I didn't mean for it to happen. I was confused, turned around. I spent so long playing the game, I couldn't see outside of it" ("Decoherence" 00:10:50-00:11:05). As a non-place, the amusement park is absent of objects by which individuals might orient themselves. This sense returns to the spectator as one of severe separation of the self from the setting, a firm spatial de-familiarization. Similarly, Logan, with whom William first arrives at Westworld, also spends an increasing interval of time in this synthetic non-place of the park, immersed in its attractions of sex and violence. After becoming absorbed by Westworld, William decides to take over Delos. To illustrate that Logan is unstable and, accordingly, unable to take over his father's company, he strips him, puts him on a horse, ties his hands, and slaps the horse's behind to set it off running toward the park's border. As argued, Westworld is famous for offering its guests an immersion factor; the more you explore the park's boundaries, the more the thin line between the "real" outside world and the "unreal" Westworld becomes vague. Akecheta, one of Westworld's oldest hosts and the leader of the "Ghost Nation," eventually encounters an emotionally ruined Logan, talking to himself: "Walk... walk in on me, buddy. Otherwise, you and me [sic] drown... Drowning... wha... wha... fucker... fucking yourself... Yourself...This is... This is an illusion . . . This is all... broken. There's got... There's gotta be a way out... out of here . . . This is the wrong world" ("Kiksuya" 00:16:42-00:17:46). Logan's incoherent ramblings emphasize how he has become ensnared by the pervading sensation of

placelessness. Precisely, placelessness points toward the existence of an environment without significant places and, at the same time, a viewpoint that does not recognize the special significance in places (Relph 143). According to Augé's argument, such an attitude sets into motion the sense of misplacement or, better said, of being without roots and thus unanchored (10). Clearly, Logan's connection to reality, not unlike William's, becomes determinately delicate after spending a substantial time span at Westworld's borders, thus instigating an intersecting identity crisis (Relph 143) which culminated once he returned to the real world – unable to face reality, Logan overdosed.

5.2. Mike Bockoven's *FantasticLand* (2016)

The subchapter will start with outlining the summary of Mike Bockoven's novel. Afterward, it will attempt to assert FantasticLand[92] as, according to Edward Relph's argument, "Consumerland," a single-purpose site guaranteeing its guests' absolute amusement. Because FantasticLand is built through technique-oriented planning, it is non-relational, that is, non-indicative of individual identities, and not imbued with history, thus meeting all of the mandatory criteria to be classified as Marc Augé's non-place (77). The subchapter will also stress that, after the decided disintegration of authority, FantasticLand allows absolute immersion, enabling individuals to experience the active pleasure of role-playing (Augé 103). Precisely, role-play is reducible to aggressive acting-out or, following Havi Carel's reformulation of Freud's theory of life and death instincts, the destructive discharge of the death drives' phenomenon of sadism. Because the tribes are enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment during the decided abuse, degradation, and destruction of one another, they will be asserted as moral monsters, as per Michel Foucault's postulation. Therefore, as a non-place absent of authority, the function of FantasticLand is to enable its employees to stand, in the Foucauldian sense, outside of the law (92). Finally, the subchapter seeks to clarify that immersion, an absolute absence of identification with a particular place which is a result of prolonged role-play in non-places, invokes an alienation from other people

[92] No previously conducted research on Bockoven's *FantasticLand: A Novel* was available at the time of writing the dissertation.

and “real” places, culminating in an identity crisis (Relph 143) that leads the former FantasticLand’s employers to contemplate suicide once they return to the outside world.

Since its initial construction in the 1970s, FantasticLand has conclusively confirmed its status as an amusement park providing its visitors with immense pleasure. When Hurricane Sadie hit the eastern coast of Florida, cutting-off FantasticLand from the rest of the civilization, the rescue teams settled that the park was self-sufficient, its provisions permitting the trapped staff to survive for a prolonged period. While the teams worked on other points, the trapped staff started creating competing “tribes,” the Pirates, the ShopGirls, the Freaks, the Fairies, the Deadpools, and the Mole People, thus settling in their respective territories. In an attempt to accumulate resources, the tribes started fighting for food and, afterward, social supremacy. Eventually, the situation escalated to the point that one of the Pirates, Brock Hockney, mercilessly murdered one of the injured staff-members, smashing his head with a metal pole. Subsequently, the staff-members started waging war on one another, instigating the infamous “Battle of the Tribes.” Thirty-five days later, the authorities who attempted at rescuing the surviving staff-members saw an appalling scene – butchered body parts beaten to a pulp scattered across the amusement park, severed heads impaled on stakes, bodies, sprung by their necks, hanging from FantasticLand’s logo, human bones littering the gift-shops, and viscera decaying in the humid Florida sun. Bockoven’s *FantasticLand* is introduced as a fact-finding investigation and a series of first-person interviews conducted by Adam Jakes, which aims at connecting the shocking series of events that transpired in America’s once-mighty amusement park.

FantasticLand is immediately introduced as “Consumerland” (Relph 93), an American institution guaranteeing its guests’ entertainment ever since the 1970s. Exaggerated signs scattered around the park, such as “Isn’t it great to be in FantasticLand!” (Bockoven 44) and “HAPPINESS IS OUR JOB” (Ibid.), substantiate the statement that it is a single-purpose site, generally aimed at amusing its guests. According to Relph’s argument, the places whose primary purpose is to satisfy their guests are subjected to “Disneyfication” (33). In other words, they are transformed through the application of absurd adornments, chaotic colors, and the accidental appropriation of actual styles and names (Relph 93). The park’s principal architect, Johnny Fresno, aimed at creating a colossal “fantasy-land” in the center of New York City and, in the attempt of assuring its identity, attributed it with all of the above-cited

characteristics. The 2,200-acre amusement park is arranged in six areas – after arriving at the absurdly adorned Golden Road, the guests can choose between the Fairy Prairie, the Fantastic Future World, the World's Circus, the Hero Haven, and the Pirate Cove. As one of the employees, Jessica Landis, explains, all of these areas are completely different, underlining the uniqueness of the park. Their only aim is to provide an exceptional experience to their guests (Bockoven 31). For example, after purchasing an expensive entrance ticket, individuals can immerse themselves in a chaotically carnivalesque culinary experience with spandex-dressed trapezist somersaulting over their dinner tables or observe a juggler balancing on an elephant's back. Upon arriving at the Pirate Grove, the guests can feel a faux breeze and hear artificial waves while being welcomed by swashbuckling pirates and dancing girls. Therefore, it can be said that the above discussed "Disneyfication" is the decontextualization of real places, that is, the process of reducing a particular place's potential meaning and repackaging it for mass consumerism. According to Relph, "Disneyland" or "Consumerland" is also characterized by a bricolage of plastic history. Besides the "Revolutionary War" area, the amusement park provides its youngest guests with, as one employee explains, the "Fantastic Folks from History" ride, taking them through ancient Egypt, Rome, and France (161). Because the guests generally ignore the intricacies of FantasticLand, its identity becomes irrelevant in comparison to its primary purpose – guaranteeing absolute amusement. Not unlike Westworld's guests, FantasticLand's guests are only "incidental observers." They display an unselfconscious attitude toward places according to which places are, as per Relph's argument, perceived as passive backgrounds for their activities and are incidental to those activities (52). In other words, "what we are doing overshadows where we are doing it" (Ibid.). Although Fresno attempted at synthesizing its singularity so that it stood out from its competitors, FantasticLand's focus on functional efficiency reduced it to an exchangeable non-place, enabling a homogenous experience (Relph 90). This functional efficiency equated it with similar single-purpose sites such as Disney and Universal, repeatedly referred to by FantasticLand's employees.

In line with Relph's premise, FantasticLand has been produced through technique-oriented planning that assesses places according to their practicality, disregarding their diversity in favor of achieving their full potential (80-81). Therefore, the park is non-relational, that is, non-indicative of individual identities, and non-historical, thus meeting all of the mandatory criteria to be classified as Augé's non-place (77). In other words, the non-

place of the park is divorced from both phenomenology's and human geography's systemic signifiers, suggesting nothing of the individuals temporarily inhabiting it. The amusement park is also contractual, inducing individuals to act in compliance with "prescriptive," "prohibitive," and "informative" instructions (Augé 96). One of FantasticLand's employees substantiates this statement by saying that the park is under up-to-the-second satellite surveillance, supervising both its guests' and employees' activities (Bockoven 71). The previous subchapter attempted at clarifying that, contrary to Augé's non-places that provide accessibility to anthropological places, Westworld's principal purpose is to guarantee the gratification of its guests' "violent delights." What differentiates FantasticLand from Westworld is that the former does not explicitly enable the discharge of death drives; only after the absolute dissolution of authority does the amusement park alter into a playground for aggressive acting-out. After all, during the fully-functioning phase of FantasticLand, guests are constantly reminded that, as Augé argues, the explicit contract does, indeed, exist (101). After hurricane Sadie hit Florida, the senior staff evacuated, abandoning its younger members to manage by themselves. What does one do when one is in an abandoned amusement park where one can do whatever one wants because there is no one to stop them? As it turns out, there are several options.

Some individuals started breaking into shops, stealing various valuables and money, some started drinking with their friends, and some simply milled about the park. One of the park's employees explains that, in the absence of an authoritarian structure, everything seemed "wrong;" people were purposelessly wandering around the amusement park, awaiting precise instructions (Bockoven 191). In an attempt to introduce a structure similar to FantasticLand's, the trapped staff formed "tribes," the Pirates, the ShopGirls, the Freaks, the Fairies, the Deadpools, and the Mole People, settling in their respective territories, electing leaders and, afterward, establishing explicit rules. For example, one of the employees explained that he immediately sided with the Pirates as "the rules were clear, the leader was clear, and he was strong" (215). Eventually, the situation escalated to the point that the leader of the Pirates, Brock Hockney, smashed an injured staff member's head with a metal pole. The incident induced FantasticLand's employees to realize that "all authority has been dissolved" (353). Soon after, the staff-members waged a war on one another, instigating the infamous "Battle of the Tribes," transforming the once-influential institution into "Slaughter Land" and the employees, as Glenn Guignol who was the head of the Freaks explains, to

"little stabby-stabby monsters" (223). After the disintegration of one's determinants or, in the context of FantasticLand, authority, non-places allow absolute immersion, enabling individuals to experience, as Augé emphasizes, the gratification that comes from role-playing (103). The fully-functioning, pre-hurricane FantasticLand, contrary to its competitors, granted its guests the immersion factor, eventually forcing them to explore the park's premises despite the hurricane-related danger. For example, commenting on his haphazard conduct after the hurricane, one of the guests, Aaron Hoffman, confessed that he simply *had* to visit the park regardless of the evacuation plan (Bockoven 51; emphasis added). The initial function of the immersion factor was to compel its guests to consume its content regardless of potential risk. However, in the post-hurricane park, this factor facilitated role-play. Not unlike the previously discussed *Westworld*, such role-play can be defined as aggressive acting-out or the tendency toward the destruction of other organisms.

Specifically, as soon as it became clear that there was no chain of command instructing individuals on how to behave, FantasticLand's employees, as Brock Hockney states, start seeing their time together as an adventure (125). The Hero Haven employees were the first to form their tribe, the Deadpools,[93] led by the costumed Jill the Soldier. Soon after, Hockey also formed the Pirates who immersed themselves in role-play by wearing costumes, wielding weapons, and heeding to a code of conduct: "*A pirate gets what he wants, and what he wants he gets. He'll spill blood for his brothers, a pirate never quits*" (205-206). According to Augé, during role-play, an individual is relieved of their determinants, becoming no more than what they do in their respective role (103). The above-cited code, implying that individuals had to both handle and/or inflict pain, both unified and relieved the Pirates of determinants/potential consequences, enabling a consequence-free enactment of savagery. For example, after ambushing two of the amusement park's employees, the Pirates parlayed to purchase "the woman" and, as soon as the agreement fell apart, brutally beat her to death and hung her body, explaining: "It was no big thing, really. It wasn't hard. It wasn't gross. We didn't feel bad about it. The only problem was later on when she started to leak" (Bockoven 222). Hockey also attacked one of the other tribes' members, Austin, frantically beating his head with a gun and, afterward, crushing his chest until he started twitching. Immersion was

[93] The tribe named itself after Deadpool, a fictional character from Marvel Comics described as a physically disfigured and deformed mutant with supernatural regenerative abilities and strength.

compulsory for potential Pirates as they had to battle to the death to become the tribe's true members. For example, after breaking his challenger's cheekbone, Chase Pounder savagely stabbed her to death, saying that he "screamed for blood until drool ran out of [his] mouth" (206), while everyone else was enthusiastically cheering and acting abandoned. Furthermore, some individuals operated independently, outside of tribes. Jason Card, one of FantasticLand's former retail cashiers, describes two persons dressed up as psychopaths, wearing pig masks, who would find vulnerable people in the park, drag them to one of the abandoned hotels, and butcher them with chainsaws. These anonymous individuals, later referred to as "Warhogs," were immersed in role-play to the extent that they replicated not only their horror icons' behavioral patterns but their visual identities as well, to experience, as Card claims, "fucked-up joy" (291).

According to Augé, the predominant sensation in non-places is that of actuality, providing people with the experience of existing in a limbo-like state of perpetual present, "everything proceeds as if space had been trapped by time, as if there were no history other than the last forty-eight hours" (104-105). FantasticLand's former employers are locked in loops of their own, struggling with a warped sense of time and space. As Louise Muskrove, the cashier at Hero Haven Comics, says: "It was really hard to tell the time in the park because all you had was the pitch black of night and the gray of the day, and they all sort of melded together after a while. Plus, there were no clocks other than watches we might have had on, and most people figured early on, what's the point?" (Bockoven 235). Such a warped sense of time and space further intensified the shared feeling of no longer being in civilization that, in turn, facilitated their full immersion. At the same time, Augé suggests that immersion is immensely problematic as individuals become intentionally self-subjected to possession (103). Specifically, in *FantasticLand*, the tribes are single-mindedly focused on aggressive acting-out to the extent that their entire post-hurricane existence is readily reducible to their all-encompassing and possessive preoccupation with savagery. In the attempt to rationalize their behavior, the fictionalized author, Adam Jakes, argued that the tribes "expressed or implied a disassociation with reality while in the park . . . the park was *supposed* to transport visitors to a different place, but in this case, it seems the effect was only heightened" (Bockoven 378). Said disassociation or, according to Augé's premise, temporary identity-loss (103), enabled the tribes to experience excessive role-play, reducible, as argued, to aggressive-acting out. One of the ShopGirls substantiates the statement by saying that she was

utterly detached (276), which essentially enabled her to behave brutally: “I beat her to death with my metal baseball bat. I didn’t stop until her head was in a very different shape from when I started. Blood wasn’t enough . . . I swung, and I swung, and I swung, and by the time I was done Freckles was a pink mess. I was doing this to her, but she did it to herself” (Ibid.). Specifically, the last sentence positively accentuates the dissociative process of the park’s employees that, in my reading, enabled the destructive discharge of death drives. Following Carel’s reformulation of Freud, said drives are specified as plural, thus signifying that their derivatives are intrinsically interrelated and, at the same time, different, conclusively conjoined through their shared tendency toward destruction, directed inwards, such as with self-aggression (masochism), or outwards, appearing as aggressive acting-out projected onto others (sadism) (52; 53). The predominant phenomenon in *FantasticLand* is that of sadism, definable as destruction aimed toward another, visible in butchered body parts beaten to a pulp, severed heads impaled on stakes, bodies, sprung by their necks, human bones littering the gift-shops, and viscera decaying in the humid Florida heat. According to Carel’s deconstruction of the Eros/Thanatos dualism, death drives are always already accompanied by a degree of narcissistic enjoyment (28). The Pirates were especially enjoying the enactment of sadism, often obsessing over torturing other tribe members. For example, to hear her skin sizzle, they pierced one of their competitor’s cheeks with a heated piece of metal that partially melted her tongue (Bockoven 136). Later on, they started gathering up the prisoners and making them fight each other which was especially entertaining to them since nobody was sure of the outcome. As Sal McVey, the head of parade dance/troupe guest relations, says, “it was a show, and we all got really into it” (221).

Furthermore, far from being isolated incidents, such acts of sadism were also apparent in the behavior of other tribes. Initially, the commander of the ShopGirls created Archer Corp to protect the tribe from the Pirates. However, during the early stages of the “Battle of the Tribes,” the commander used her improvised sword Tetanus not only to defend her tribe by simply killing another tribe member but to brutally stab her in the head, twisting the sword until she stopped kicking around. In a mock-superhero scene, she posed with a bloody sword in her hand and bragged about her achievement, thus substantiating Carel’s statement that the enactment of sadism produces an intense sense of satisfaction (28). One of the commander’s comments further clarifies that the tribe was not principally interested in survival but in perpetuating sadism for the purpose of pleasure, “one girl was super excited . . . she stands on

the couches and yells, 'I got his fucking ear!' and holds up this bloody ear and everyone just screamed and danced and whopped and hugged each other" (Bockoven 187). Carel also argues that all drives are decidedly cyclic as the diversity of their expression distinctly emphasizes that they do not have a definitive aim (8). Since the tribes were dedicated to the abuse, degradation, and destruction of one another, their aggressive acting-out was characterized by an absence of clear aim. Such behavior is best discernible during the "Council of Peace" that, although aimed at achieving an agreement between the tribes, turned into bloodshed as soon as Brock Hockney attacked all of the affiliates with a canon. In an interview with Jakes, conducted after his incarceration, Hockney confirmed the absence of the above-mentioned aim: "What was your goal? – To kill people. – Anything else? – No. I wanted causalities" (Bockoven 361-362). Carel also asserts that, whether obtained through real and/or imagined objects, the death drives' demands are only ever temporarily satisfied, thus testifying to a clear connection between themselves and repetition compulsion (8; 120). In *FantasticLand's* introduction, Jakes asks himself how did individuals, basking in the best conceivable circumstances to weather the hurricane, resort to acting ruthlessly so rapidly (Bockoven 15). Arguably, the fact that they resorted to ruthlessness almost immediately after lock-down debunks the idea that they were principally interested in survival. Furthermore, the repeated occurrence of aggressive acting-out also accentuates that their death drives were only ever temporarily satisfied, as per Carel's argument (8). For example, one of the Fairies' representatives explained that her "itch" for a fight remained unsatisfied even after she bashed a girl's head with a baseball bat which made her realize that they "were going to keep killing and killing and killing each other until there was just one person left on a mountain of bodies" (275). Accordingly, as battles and raids became an everyday recurrence, it became evident that instances of savagery only incited further such instances, thus testifying to their cyclicity.

As presented in the chapter's preface, both *FantasticLand* and *The Lord of the Flies* share a similar assumption. Precisely, after analyzing Golding's premise, Erdem proposes that persons, in the absence of authoritarian principles, regress to primitive states, aggressively acting-out their destructive death drives and, afterward, losing all control (*The Life Death Drives* 206). In the absence of authority, the amusement park, analogously to Golding's anonymous island, does not demand the (re)direction of deeply rooted destructive drives into meaningful private and public actions. Namely, there are several references to FantasticLand's employees either being "monsters" (15; 17; 65; 113; 223; 343; 347; 361) or

behaving "monstrously" (337). As argued, the tribes were dedicated to the abuse, degradation, and destruction of one another. As Gemma Albers, the first-aid station chief, claims: "This wasn't 'I'm fighting to prove something,' this was 'I'm fighting to kill you" (300). Albers describes a particularly violent scene during which the Deadpools brutally beat a Pirate to death, despite him suffocating in his blood, and took turns kicking him in the head until they saw brain matter splattering the street. Primarily devoted to the aimless and destructive discharge of the death drives' phenomenon, enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment, the tribe members are, therefore, in line with Foucault's premise, apparent moral monsters, who break the law, violate the pact, and prefer their interests to the laws of the society to which they belong (Foucault 92). In other words, the function of FantasticLand, once absent of authority, is to enable its employees to stand outside of law (Ibid.). Upon entering the park at the end of the novel, Travis Barnes, the former Lieutenant of the Florida National Guard, describes seeing a dozen decrepit bodies that were neatly laid out in a row. They were all girls, hurt in a variety of ways, with their heads bashed in. Barnes asks himself: "Why lay them out, you know? Why would you do that unless you are totally off your gourd or some sort of monster?" (Bockoven 324). Barnes' statement substantiates the idea that the post-hurricane non-place of FantasticLand, disconnected from civilization, allows the articulation of moral monstrosity.

Finally, following Relph's premise, place is a significant foundation of one's identity (134). Conversely, as individuals spend more and more time in synthetic non-places, their connection to reality becomes delicate, eventually culminating in an intersecting identity crisis (143). After being entrapped in the non-place of the park, the employees started experiencing "detachment" (Bockoven 201) or dealing with problems by "pulling in" (275). These two actions affected the normalization of violence, observable in one of the tribe members' behavioral patterns, "there were moments, perched on rooftops of confectionaries and clothing stores and year-round Christmas shops, when Alice shoot arrow after arrow into the heads, necks, chests, and legs of her coworkers as they bled and screamed and died below. It is not a stretch to speculate that it become somewhat normal for her" (17). According to Augé, "spatial arrangements . . . express the group's identity (its actual origins are often diverse, but the group is established, assembled, and united by the identity of the place)" (45). If read in correlation with FantasticLand's former employees, it is clear that their identification with group identity, which is always already artificial as it is construed in

relation to the technologically created non-place of the amusement park, facilitates detachment from their singular identities. Yet, this detachment, originally enabling excessive acting-out, culminated in an identity crisis as soon as the employees escaped the amusement park, reconnected with the real world, and became aware of their aberrant behavior. For example, Chase comments: "I wish it had been me that died on that floor. I wish I didn't have to live with my failure and her face and the things that I did. Every day I want to die. Every day" (Bockoven 205). After spending a substantial time span at FantasticLand, immersed in role-play, Chase's connection to reality became delicate. Precisely, the role-play that initially provided a sense of place and shared identity with his tribe members resulted in the emptying of Chase's individuality. Similarly, Augé argues that non-places are spaces of solitude, that is, the only identity present there is the shared identity of being in a passenger and/or a traveler role (101). The absence of these roles in the "real" world, accompanied by the reinstitution of authoritarian rules, instigated Chase's identity crisis that culminated in his contemplation of suicide. It is undeniable that this is not exclusively Chase's experience. It is a common sentiment among all of the former employers of FantasticLand. For example, Jakes states that Angela Barlow, one of the ShopGirl's archers, was continuously crying because she could not bear the consequences of her brutal deeds that were committed during the "Battle of the Tribes." Specifically, she was unable to understand how she could have killed with impunity only a few days after being cut off from civilization. As stated in the introduction, Sørensen suggests that aggressive acting-out is confined to the setting of non-places while redemption is readily realized in places "immediately outside of the functionalist boundaries of non-places" (109; 110). Arguably, FantasticLand's employees first undergo an identity crisis and, afterward, regain a redemptive impulse. However, having experienced extensive role-play in the non-place of the park, they cannot reinstate their prior connection to reality but are condemned to continuously relieve the consequences of their aggressive acting-out.

5.3. Conclusion – Violent Delights, Violent Ends

The subchapters positioned the two amusement parks, Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's Westworld and Mike Bockoven's FantasticLand, as achieved through technique-oriented planning that mass-produces places primarily focused on functional efficiency, that is, on guaranteeing its guests' amusement. As single-purpose sites based on "pseudo-history," and

absent of symbolic significance, the two parks are non-indicative of individual identities and non-historical, thus meeting all of the mandatory criteria to be classified as Augé's non-place (77). While the purpose of Augé's non-places is to provide accessibility to anthropological places, the two subchapters clarified that the principal purpose of the two parks is to satisfy one's overt desire to perform physical and/or psychological brutalities. Analogously to Augé's passenger, after buying the expensive entrance ticket, guaranteeing their innocence by adhering to an identity-check, and countersigning the contract (101) that relieves the park from its potential responsibilities, Westworld's guests accede to anonymity that assures absolute immersion, enabling individuals to enact their cowboy fantasies, experiencing the pleasure of role-playing. Still, what differentiates FantasticLand from Westworld is that the former does not immediately facilitate role-play; only after the absolute dissolution of authority does the amusement park alter into a playground for aggressive acting-out. Contrary to Christiansen and Sørensen, the subchapters clarified that these non-places are not inherently violent but that the dissolution of one's determinants provides for absolute anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (Augé 103), enabling the enactment of violence. Additionally, elaborating on the two authors who have not specified which type of violence happens in non-places, the subchapters referred to Carel's recent reconstruction of the Freudian two-modeled death drive theory to argue that role-play is reducible to aggressive acting-out or, specifically, to the destructive discharge of the death drive's phenomenon of sadism.

Furthermore, because both Westworld's and FantasticLand's guests and/or employees are enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment during the decided abuse, degradation, and destruction of the hosts and/or one another, they have been positioned as, according to Foucault, moral monsters. Substantiating the statement are artificial and/or real corpses and lumps of torn flesh scattered across both Westworld's and FantasticLand's streets – abused, beaten, stabbed, sexually assaulted, and mercilessly mutilated. Accordingly, the two amusement parks, as non-places absent of authority, enable their guests and/or employees to stand, in the Foucauldian sense, outside of the law (92). More precisely, decidedly divorced from everyday experiences, non-places either directly, as in *Westworld*, or indirectly, as in *FantasticLand*, allow the articulation of moral monstrosity. In line with Augé's argument, the two subchapters also argued that immersion is problematic as both Westworld's guests and FantasticLand's former employees become intentionally self-subjected to possession to the

extent that their entire existence is reducible to their single-minded preoccupation with the enactment of sadism. Ultimately, according to Relph's argument, the subchapters clarified that "people's sense of personal identity" is intricately connected "with place identity" or, more precisely, with one's home/house, which functions as the foundation of individual identity (55). Since no one is "at home" in both Westworld and FantasticLand, the two artificially constructed non-places annihilate all affect asides from alienation, apathy, and separation (Christiansen 141). Namely, non-places generate a sensation of the groundlessness of one's own being, whereby a sense of self is violated. Thus, the absolute absence of identification provoked by prolonged role-play in non-places invariably invokes an alienation from the "real" world, instigating an intersecting identity crisis which culminates in contemplating suicide, as with FantasticLand's former employees, or with committing it, as with *Westworld*'s Logan.

6. Conclusion

In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience (*1977), Yi-Fu Tuan discusses the two central concepts of human geography – space and place. Although he asserts them as codependent elements of the lived world, he states that the former signifies fixity, essential in establishing a sense of stability, while the latter emphasizes endlessness (3). When space is inscribed with the "oneiric" experiences of phenomenology and human geography, it is transformed into place. However, neither phenomenology nor human geography accounts for the possibility of inscribing "non-oneiric" or "negative" ones. Such an inscription, although "non-oneiric" or "negative," also implies both individual action and interpersonal interaction. Thus, the spatial concepts discussed in the first three chapters are already places. In summary, places cannot be studied apart from the subjects that inhabit them; without the subject, the place is meaningless. In other words, without the inscription of individual content, it is nothing more than a possibility or, as proposed in chapter four, a non-place. As argued throughout the dissertation, no place has an *a priori* existence that was somehow established prior to the process of habitation by an anonymous agent of inscription. However, what happens when this individual is a transgressor, a morally depraved or degenerate monster, whose inscribed content clearly invalidates the Bachelardian exclusively oneiric experiences? The dissertation's chapters dealt with specific spatial concepts of the city, the house, the body, observed as a spatial construct, and non-place. Still, the underlying tendency of all of these chapters was to investigate the interrelation between places and monstrous selves.

The first chapter, entitled "Spatiality and the City," focused on the concept of the city. Since the city is characterized by myriad modes of aesthetic articulations, it aimed its attention at *fin de siècle* London to argue that the city coexists as a safe place of belonging and a space of anxiety. This duality was examined on the example of Stephen Hunter's novel *I, Ripper* (2016) and Richard Warlow's television series *Ripper Street* (2012-2016). Drawing inspiration from Yi-Fu Tuan and Julian Wolfreys, the case study subchapters argued that, aside from the Ripper persona, the two narratives reintroduce and, partially, reinvent the end-of-century city by delineating its double articulation. Comfortably fluctuating between the two articulations of the city is the figure of the flâneur. Following in the footsteps of Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, and Tom McDonough, the chapter contended that the focus on the transgressive features of flânerie allows for an alternative definition of the figure as an

active agent who displays a desire to pursue the individuals who surround him. Thus, the two case study subchapters underlined both Thomas Dare's and Edmund Reid's transformation from the traditionally conceptualized figure of the flâneur into the stalker/serial killer and, in Reid's case, into the detective whose behavioral patterns point toward his cryptic connection to criminality. The subchapters have contended that while Reid's *other*-oriented practices are a direct result of the city's double articulation that demands two types of responses that teeter between being law-abiding and criminally inclined, Dare's practices trigger his transformation into the serial killer. Ultimately, the main argument of the two subchapters is that the moral monsters who violate social pacts, prioritizing their own interests over societal rules and norms while committing atrocious acts of murder and mutilation, imprint East End's streets with the marker of moral monstrosity. Drawing from Marko Lukić and Tijana Parezanović's postulation that the serial killer subverts the spaces that once shaped his experience via the inscription of aggressive drives (6), and phenomenology's and human geography's argument according to which places do not exist prior to the process of individual inscription, the subchapters stressed that the marker of monstrosity cannot be a place's *a priori* property. Therefore, the relationship between the East End and the criminal is cyclical. In other words, the criminal does not merely use the city as a passive stage where he stages his transgressive behavior (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 9). Every encounter between the monstrous subject and East End presupposes the inscription of non-oneiric content. Therefore, East End's atmospheric and architectural conditions allow for the articulation of moral monstrosity that, in turn, construes that same setting as monstrous.

The second chapter, entitled "Haunted Domestic Space," focused on the concept of the haunted house. The two case study subchapters asserted the two haunted houses as projections of its original owners' non-oneiric content on the example of Richard Matheson's novel *Hell House* (1959) and Mike Flanagan's television series *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018). The subchapters stressed that Hell and Hill House's architectural attributes, although emblematic of the uncanny, are not uncanny *per se*. The uncanny thus emerges as a psychological phenomenon, a sensation that stems from the subject because it always arises as a result of the return of the repressed. Accordingly, drawing from Anthony Vidler's reformulation of Sigmund Freud, the two subchapters have underlined the uncanny as the experience of "spatial estrangement" (Vidler 11), provoked by the projection of the original owner's non-oneiric content onto the house that contains it indefinitely. Interrelating it with

phenomenology's and human geography's premise that informs the interpretative direction of the dissertation, the projection was defined as a deliberate inscription that initially altered the house into an affective accumulation. Thus, the subchapters stressed that both Emeric Belasco and Poppy Hill have successfully subverted the Bachelardian dream house of childhood memories, setting into motion the slippage between the sensations of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. Despite the tendency to initially classify both Belasco and Hill as clichéic entities, the subchapters have argued that they have retained the marker of moral monstrosity because of their decision to deliberately haunt the inhabitants of both houses for the purpose of obtaining pleasure. Finally, the two subchapters have argued that the relationship between Belasco, Poppy, and the two houses is reciprocal because both abuse the two houses as instruments to afflict the new inhabitants or "intruders." While Belasco uses the house as a stage upon which he projects images of supposedly sentient presences to instigate the return of the inhabitants' repressed instinctual impulses, Poppy plays on the inhabitants' unresolved trauma, seducing them into committing both murder and suicide. Finally, the subchapters have contended that the two houses are not autonomous agents of destructive disruption, capable of independently consuming or destroying the inhabitants, but instruments to setting into motion the slippage between the supposedly familiar – *heimlich*, and the unfamiliar – *unheimlich*. In addition to substantiating that the houses never acquire a psyche of their own (Bachelard 46), the two subchapters have delineated Hell and Hill House as Belasco's and Poppy's doubles precisely because they stop illustrating sentient inclinations as soon as the original owners are destroyed or dispersed.

The third chapter, entitled "The Artificial Body as a Spatial Construct," approached the artificial body of the cyborg as a spatial construct on the example of Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina* (2014) and Thomas Berger's novel *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* (2004). The two case study subchapters opened with a discussion on the cyborg's potential to denaturalize the naturalized coherence among the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. Drawing from Donna Haraway's and Judith Butler's anti-essentialist arguments that invalidate the idea that there are fixed, intrinsic, or innate attributes that assert individuals as male or female, the two case study subchapters stressed that the three hyper-sexualized cyborgs, Ava, Kyoko, and Phyllis, do not break down the intricate interplay between the beforementioned categories. Since they are portrayed as passive objects, that is, projections of the scientist's sexual desires, these artificial bodies accentuate the misogynistic undercurrents

of the category of "woman" (Creed 153) that still permeate contemporary cyborg representations. Most importantly, in line with Linda McDowell's assessment of the body being the place *par excellence*, its "plasticity" and "malleability" stressing that it is subjected to the process of continuous construction (34), the two subchapters argued that the artificial bodies are transformed through the inscription of an individual's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. The subchapters thus approached the artificial body from a so-far unexplored angle. They argued that technologically built bodies can be analyzed as spatially changeable constructs, repeatedly reiterated through individual interactions, as postulated by phenomenology and human geography. Since both Nathan Bateman and Ellery Pierce are primarily concerned with creating so-called "sex-bots," the two subchapters contended that the inscribed non-oneiric content is indicative of Anne Balsamo's unconscious desires (149). Precisely, her postulation allows for the analysis of the cyborg's body as, according to Anthony Vidler's reappropriation of Sigmund Freud, the representation of repressed content (79) or, in my reading, of instinctual impulses, interpreted as either deviation in respect to the sexual object, as in Nathan's case, or unresolved Oedipal impulses, as in Ellery's case. Therefore, the two subchapters stressed that the uncanny is not endangered by intellectual uncertainty but by the desublimation of the supposedly sublimated instinctual impulses on the synthetic surface of the body. The subchapters then stressed that the artificial body is not monstrous because of its ability to become "otherwise" or because it complicates the stabilization of the Other. All of the cyborgs perform in accordance with culturally intelligible codes, consistently passing as "human." Yet, because it is *almost* human, the cyborg invites the violence of initial inscription and ensuing physical exploitation under the pretense of conducting scientific research, exposing, in turn, the moral monstrosity of Garland's and Berger's male scientists.

The fourth and final chapter, "Non-place," examined the homonymous notion on the example of Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's television series *Westworld* (2016-2020) and Mike Bockoven's novel *FantasticLand* (2016). Drawing from Edward Relph, the subchapters positioned the two amusement parks, Nolan and Joy's Westworld and Bockoven's FantasticLand, as achieved through technique-oriented planning that mass-produces places primarily focused on functional efficiency that aims at guaranteeing its guests' amusement. The preoccupation with said efficiency positions the two parks as single-purpose sites that are absent of symbolic significance. Absent of phenomenology's and human geography's

systemic values, these places meet all the mandatory criteria to be classified as Marc Augé's non-place whose primary purpose is to provide accessibility to anthropological places. Drawing from Augé's argument, the chapter clarified that the principal purpose of the two amusement parks is to satisfy one's overt desire to perform physical and psychological brutalities. After entering the park, Westworld's guests accede to anonymity that assures absolute immersion, enabling individuals to enact their cowboy fantasies and experience the pleasure of role-playing. What differentiates FantasticLand from Westworld is that the former does not immediately facilitate role-play; only after the absolute dissolution of authority does the amusement park alter into a playground for aggressive acting-out. The subchapters then clarified that those non-places are not inherently violent, but that the dissolution of one's determinants provides for absolute anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (Augé 103), enabling, in turn, the enactment of violence. The subchapters referred to Havi Carel's recent reconstruction of the Freudian two-modeled death drive theory to argue that role-play is reducible to aggressive acting-out or, specifically, to the destructive discharge of the death drive's phenomenon of sadism. Furthermore, because both Westworld's and FantasticLand's guests and/or employees are enveloped by excessive narcissistic enjoyment during the abuse, degradation, and destruction of the hosts and/or one another, they have been positioned as, according to Michel Foucault's argument, moral monsters. Thus, the central argument of the chapter is that non-places, divorced from everyday experiences, either directly, as in Westworld, or indirectly, as in FantasticLand, allow the articulation of moral monstrosity. Ultimately, according to Edward Relph's argument, the subchapters argued that the absolute absence of identification provoked by prolonged role-play in non-places, invokes an alienation from the "real" world which instigates an intersecting identity crisis, and which culminates in contemplating suicide, as with FantasticLand's former employees, or with committing it, as with *Westworld*'s Logan.

Despite the fact that the four chapters construed different theoretical frameworks for the analysis of specific spatial concepts, they were united in their tendency to underline the inextricability of said concepts and subjects. Thus, they contended that the space/place dialectic cannot be studied independently of the process of individual inscription and that this inscription can presuppose one's both oneiric and non-oneiric content. Finally, these theoretical frameworks could be employed to examine the relationship between different

spatial, that is, placial concepts and articulations of monstrosity, an area of research that still remains largely uninvestigated.

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7. Summary and Keywords in English and Croatian

SUMMARY

The dissertation analyzes the interrelation among places and monstrous selves in popular culture narratives. It is divided into four distinct chapters dealing with specific spatial concepts – the first chapter focuses on the concept of the city, the second on the concept of the house, the third on the concept of the body, observed as a spatial construct, and the fourth on the concept of non-place. Even though the four chapters construe different theoretical frameworks through which to analyze specific spatial concepts, they are united in their tendency to study the inextricability of said concepts and individual subjects. Studying such an interrelation presupposes the positioning of place as a relational category, continuously constructed and reconstructed by individual interactions. Therefore, the basic premise that permeates the first three chapters of the dissertation is based on human geography's premise that spaces are transformed into places by means of inscribing individual meaning and on phenomenology's positioning of place as affective or, more precisely, as always already partial. Yet, the dissertation is not primarily interested in the inscription of oneiric experiences only but, since it is analyzing the interrelation among places and monstrous selves, in the covertly dislodged content of the unconscious. Thus, the first three chapters consider what happens when the individual is a transgressor, a morally depraved or degenerate monster, whose inscribed content clearly invalidates both phenomenology's and human geography's premise. Conversely, the dissertation's final chapter discusses the concept of non-place that has consistently eluded critical engagement in the context of popular culture. It contends that the dissolution of one's determinants upon entering a particular non-place provides for absolute anonymity, identity loss, and ensuing role-play (Augé 103), enabling one's aggressive acting-out, defined as the destructive discharge of the death drives' phenomenon of sadism. Finally, the dissertation's chapters delineate different theoretical frameworks that could be implemented to investigate relationships among spatial concepts and articulations of monstrosity, an area of research that remains largely uninvestigated.

KEYWORDS

Space, place, monstrosity, popular culture, city, house, body, non-place

SAŽETAK RADA

Prostor i artikulacija monstruoznosti unutar popularne kulture

Ova se doktorska disertacija bavi međupovezanosti različitih prostornih koncepata i artikulacije monstruoznosti na primjeru narativa popularne kulture. Nakon uvodnog poglavlja koje predstavlja osnovne teorijske postavke koje će se koristiti kroz čitavu disertaciju, rad je podijeljen na četiri poglavlja, od kojih se prvo odnosi na koncept grada, drugo na koncept kuće, treće na koncept tijela, koje se promatra kao prostorni konstrukt, te četvrto na koncept nemjesta (*non-place*).

Prvo poglavlje, „Spatiality and the City", proučava koncept grada. S obzirom na to da koncept grada podrazumijeva široki spektar raznovrsnih artikulacija, posebna pozornost je usmjerena na *fin de siècle* London koji koegzistira kao sigurno mjesto pripadnosti i zastrašujući prostor tjeskobe. Spomenuta dvojnost se proučava na primjeru romana Stephena Huntera *I, Ripper* (2016) i televizijske serije Richarda Warlowa *Ripper Street* (2012-2016). Na temelju teorijskih postavki Yi-Fu Tuana i Juliana Wolfreysa, poglavlje prikazuje kako spomenuti narativi nanovo otkrivaju grad s kraja 19. stoljeća tako što ocrtavaju njegovu dvostruku artikulaciju. Poglavlje zatim posebnu pozornost usmjerava na književni lik flâneura. Na temelju teorijskih postavki Charlesa Baudelairea, Waltera Benjamina, i Toma McDonougha, flâneur se ne pozicionira kao pasivni promatrač, već kao pojedinac koji aktivno utječe na svoju okolinu. Nadalje, studije podcrtavaju preobrazbu Thomasa Darea i Edmunda Reida koji nisu koncipirani kao arhetipski flâneuri. Dare je pozicioniran kao vrebač, to jest, serijski ubojica, a Reid kao detektiv čiji obrasci ponašanja upućuju na njegovu povezanost sa zločinom. S jedne strane, poglavlje tvrdi kako su Reidove moralno upitne prakse direktna posljedica dvostruke artikulacije grada koja zahtijeva dvije vrste ponašanja koje osciliraju između poštovanja zakona i naklonjenosti zločinu, dok Dareove prakse, s druge strane, iniciraju njegovu transformaciju u serijskog ubojicu. U konačnici, glavni argument dvaju potpoglavlja jest da moralno monstruozni pojedinci koji krše socijalne paktove, to jest, valoriziraju vlastite interese iznad društveno propisanih normi, tokom ubojstava i tjelesnih sakaćenja upisuju označitelja monstruoznosti na površinu East Enda. Oslanjajući se na teorijske postavke Marka Lukića i Tijane Parezanović, koji tvrde kako serijski ubojice podrivaju mjesta pomoću upisa agresivnih nagona (6), i postavki fenomenologije i humane geografije koje tvrde kako mjesta ne postoje prije postupka pojedinačnog upisa, poglavlja

naglašavaju kako označitelj monstruoznosti ne može biti apriorno svojstvo mjesta. Odnos između East Enda i kriminalaca koji ga nastanjuju je cikličan. Drugim riječima, kriminalac ne čini grad sudionikom u inscenaciji kriminalnog ponašanja (Wolfreys, *Inventions of the City* 9) jer svaki susret između monstruoznog subjekta i mjesta najavljuje neizbrisiv upis ne-oniričkog sadržaja. Stoga, vremenski uvjeti i arhitektonska obilježja East Enda omogućuju artikulaciju moralne monstruoznosti koja, pak, konstruira taj isti prostor kao monstruozan.

Drugo poglavlje, „Haunted Domestic Space", proučava koncept uklete kuće. Na primjeru romana Richarda Mathesona *Hell House* (1959) i televizijske serije *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018) Mikea Flanagana, potpoglavlja ukazuju na to kako su uklete kuće projekcije ne-oniričkog upisa njihovih izvornih vlasnika. Potpoglavlja naglašavaju kako arhitektonska obilježja kuća nisu *unheimlich* sama po sebi. *Unheimlich* nije isključivo estetski, već i psihološki fenomen koji je uvijek unaprijed ovisan o subjektu. Na temelju Vidlerovog čitanja prije spomenutog koncepta Sigmunda Freuda, potpoglavlja pozicioniraju *unheimlich* kao osjećaj otuđenja koji je izazvan projekcijom ne-oniričkog sadržaja izvornog vlasnika na kuću, koja ga sadržava kao stalno svojstvo. Kako bi se projekcija definirala kao namjerni upis koji je kuću inicijalno transformirao u afektivnu akumulaciju individualnog značenja, Vidlerovo čitanje je povezano s teorijskim postavkama fenomenologije i humane geografije koje čine polazišnu točku interpretativnog smjera disertacije. Potpoglavlja stoga tvrde kako su Emeric Belasco i Poppy Hill u potpunosti potkopali Bachelardovu percepciju prostora kao sigurnog utočišta, te pokrenuli proklizavanje između označitelja sigurnosti *heimlicha*, i njegove antiteze, *unheimlicha*. Unatoč tendenciji da se Belasco i Hill inicijalno pozicioniraju kao klišeizirani, onozemaljski entiteti, potpoglavlja smatraju kako su zadržali značajke moralne monstruoznosti zbog njihove odluke da svjesno progone stanovnike obiju kuća u svrhu postizanja vlastitog zadovoljstva. Konačno, potpoglavlja pokazuju kako odnos Belasca, Poppy i dviju kuća nije jednostran već cikličan upravo zato što ih zlorabe kao instrumente sa svrhom pokoravanja novih stanovnika, to jest, uljeza. Dok Belasco koristi kuću kao pozornicu na koju projicira obrise naizgled samosvjesnih entiteta kako bi potaknuo povratak potisnutih instinktivnih impulsa stanovnika, Poppy se poigrava njihovim neprocesuiranim traumama kako bi ih indirektno natjerala da počine ubojstva i samoubojstva. Konačno, potpoglavlja smatraju kako Hell i Hill House nisu autonomni inicijatori izgreda koji su sposobni samostalno inicirati prije spomenuto proklizavanje između označitelja prividno poznatog i zastrašujuće nepoznatog. Potpoglavlja su stoga pozicionirala Hell i Hill House kao

njihove dvojnike upravo zato što se prilikom uništenja antagonista vraćaju u prvobitno stanje pasivnog postojanja.

Treće poglavlje, „The Artificial Body as a Spatial Construct“, pristupa umjetnom tijelu kiborga kao prostornom konstruktu na primjeru filma Alexa Garlanda *Ex Machina* (2015) i romanu Thomasa Bergera *Adventures of the Artificial Woman* (2004). Potpoglavlja prvotno propituju potencijal kiborga da denaturalizira naturaliziranu koherentnost među kategorijama roda, spola i seksualnosti. Na temelju antiesencijalističkih argumenata Donne Haraway i Judith Butler koji poništavaju premisu da postoje fiksni, suštinski ili urođeni atributi koji predodređuju pojedince kao muškarce ili žene, potpoglavlja smatraju kako tri hiperseksualizirana tijela Ave, Kyoko i Phyllis ne problematiziraju niti raščlanjuju zamršenu međupovezanost među prethodno spomenutim kategorijama. S obzirom na to da su prikazana kao pasivni objekti i/ili projekcije znanstvenikovih seksualnih želja, ova umjetna tijela podcrtavaju mizogine stereotipe koji prožimaju suvremene prikaze kiborga. Središnji argument poglavlja polazi od teorijske pretpostavke Linde McDowell prema kojoj su tijela prvotna mjesta. Odnosno, obilježja „plastičnosti“ i „podatnosti“ naglašavaju kako su tijela podvrgnuta procesu kontinuirane konstrukcije (34). Potpoglavlja zatim tvrde kako se umjetna kiborška tijela transformiraju upisom oniričkog i ne-oniričkog sadržaja. Drugim riječima, oslanjajući se na postavke fenomenologije i humane geografije, tehnološki koncipirana tijela mogu se analizirati kao prostorno promjenjivi konstrukti na koje utječu individualne interakcije. S obzirom na to da Nathan Bateman i Ellery Pierce prvenstveno stvaraju takozvane „seks-botove,“ studije smatraju kako se ne-oniričk sadržaj odnosi na podsvjesne želje Anne Balsamo (149). Njezine opservacije omogućuju analizu umjetnog tijela kao mjesta koje je, prema Anthonyju Vidleru, ujedno i reprezentacija potisnutog sadržaja podsvijesti (79). Taj je sadržaj specificiran kao instinktivni impuls koji je pozicioniran kao odstupanje u odnosu na seksualni objekt, kao u Nathanovom slučaju, ili neriješeni edipovski impuls, kao u Elleryjevom slučaju. Stoga, potpoglavlja napominju kako *unehimlich* ne proizlazi iz osjećaja intelektualne neizvjesnosti, već nastaje kao rezultat desublimacije navodno sublimiranih instinktivnih impulsa. Potpoglavlja zatim pokazuju kako umjetno tijelo nije monstruozno zato što nadilazi naturalizirane kategorije i time prkosi ljudskom nagonu da ga podčini kroz kategorizaciju, što, u konačnici, omogućava stabilizaciju dijalektičkog Drugog. Svi prije spomenuti kiborzi postoje u skladu s kulturološki razumljivim kodovima, kontinuirano se etablirajući unutar kategorija koje tvore termin čovječnosti. Ipak, upravo zato što je ne-čovjek

ili ontološki susjedan čovječanstvu, kiborg poziva na počinjenje nasilja i neposredno fizičko iskorištavanje pod okriljem provođenja znanstvenog istraživanja, to jest, istraživanja umjetne inteligencije. Pritom otkriva moralnu monstruoznost Garlandovih i Bergerovih muških znanstvenika koji zlostavljaju tijela kao pasivna mjesta činjenja (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 52).

Posljednje poglavlje, „Non-place“, proučava istoimeni koncept na primjeru televizijske serije Jonathana Nolana i Lise Joy *Westworld* (2016-) te romana Mikea Bockovena *FantasticLand* (2016). Na temelju teorijskih postavki Edwarda Relpha, potpoglavlja pozicioniraju Westworld i FantasticLand kao parkove koji su uspostavljeni tehnički-orijentiranim planiranjem koje masovno proizvodi prostore primarno fokusirane na funkcionalnu efikasnost koja, u kontekstu poglavlja, podrazumijeva pružanje nezaboravnog iskustva gostima. Preokupiranost efikasnošću pozicionira dva parka kao jednonamjenske prostore koji nemaju nikakav simbolički značaj. S obzirom da ovakvi prostori ne odražavaju sistemske vrijednosti fenomenologije i humane geografije, oni udovoljavaju svim kriterijima da bi ih se pozicioniralo kao Augéova nemjesta, čija je primarna svrha pružanje pristupa antropološkim mjestima. Polazeći od Augéovog teorijskog postulata, potpoglavlja smatraju kako je primarna svrha dvaju zabavnih parkova zadovoljenje potrebe za realiziranjem fizičkih i psihičkih brutalnosti njihovih posjetitelja. Nakon ulaska u Westworld, gosti ostvaruju apsolutnu anonimnost koja im omogućava uronjenost, to jest, igranje uloga koje se svodi na neometano ispunjavanje njihovih klišeiziranih, kaubojskih fantazija. S druge strane, FantasticLand ne omogućuje odmah prije spomenuto igranje uloga; park postaje poprište agresivnog djelovanja tek nakon destabilizacije njegove strukture, odnosno, nakon udara uragana. Potpoglavlja zatim ističu kako nemjesta nisu sama po sebi nasilna već kako obustava ugovornih obveza, koje osiguravaju apsolutnu anonimnost, negaciju osobnog identiteta i, samim time, neopterećenu igru uloga, omogućava nasilje. Potpoglavlja se referiraju na Havi Carel, i njezinu nedavnu reviziju Freudove nagonske teorije, kako bi pozicionirale igranje uloga kao oblik agresivnog djelovanja, to jest, kao destruktivno ispuštanje sadizma kao jednog od fenomena smrtnog nagona. S obzirom da gosti i bivši zaposlenici dvaju parkova narcisoidno uživaju tijekom zlostavljanja, degradacije i uništavanja domaćina i/ili jedni drugih, pozicionirani su kao moralno monstruozni pojedinci. Prema tome, središnji argument potpoglavlja je da nemjesta razdvojena od realnosti, bilo izravno, kao u Westworldu, ili neizravno, kao u FantasticLandu, potiču artikulaciju moralne monstruoznosti. U konačnici, prema teorijskim postavkama Edwarda Relpha, potpoglavlja pokazuju kako apsolutno

odsustvo identifikacije izazvano dugotrajnom igrom uloga na nemjestima utječe na otuđenje od „stvarnog“ svijeta, što potiče krizu identiteta. Ta kriza kulminira ili pomišljanjem na samoubojstvo, kao kod bivših zaposlenika FanasticLanda, ili njegovim počinjenjem, kao kod Westworldovog Logana.

Unatoč činjenici da sva četiri poglavlja konstruiraju različite teorijske okvire kroz koje analiziraju specifične prostorne koncepte, ujedinjeni su u naumu da naglase neraskidivu povezanost spomenutih koncepata i subjekata. Drugim riječima, argumentiraju kako se prostor ne može proučavati u izolaciji, to jest, neovisno o procesu pojedinačnog upisa. Analizom međupovezanosti prostornih koncepata i artikulacije monstruoznosti unutar popularne kulture rad će doprinijeti novim spoznajama unutar područja istraživanja koje još uvijek nedovoljno proučeno.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

Mjesto, prostor, monstruoznost, popularna kultura, grad, kuća, tijelo, nemjesto

8. Author's Biography

Emilia Musap was born on October 17th, 1989, in Zadar, Croatia. She graduated in English Language and Literature and Russian Language and Literature from the University of Zadar in 2014. Since 2017, she has been employed as a teaching assistant at the English Department in Zadar, where she has taught courses such as Anglophone Cultures and Historical Survey of English Literature, and where she currently teaches two courses – The Literature of British Romanticism and Victorian Literature. Her research interests include the Gothic genre, gender studies, space/place in literature and film, and monster studies. She has presented her papers and interests in national and international conferences on science fiction and fantasy, Victorian fiction, popular culture, cultural studies, etc. She is a member of the Croatian Association for American Studies, Northeast Popular Culture Association, the Victorian Popular Fiction Association, and the Centre for Popular Culture of the sub-department for English Literature Studies of the Department of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, at the University of Osijek. From 2021, she is also a member of the editorial board of *[sic] - a journal of literature, culture, and literary translation* and the executive editor of the English version of *Political Lexicon: Pandemic*.